

# Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle

and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge  
in Late Antiquity and Early Islam

*Translated with an introduction and notes  
by Robert G. Hoyland*

TH



## Translated Texts for Historians

300–800 AD is the time of late antiquity and the early middle ages: the transformation of the classical world, the beginnings of Europe and of Islam, and the evolution of Byzantium. TTH makes available sources translated from Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Georgian, Gothic and Armenian. Each volume provides an expert scholarly translation, with an introduction setting texts and authors in context, and with notes on content, interpretation and debates.

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Translated Texts for Historians  
Volume 57

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ROBERT G. HOYLAND

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University  
Press



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## CONTENTS

Preface and Acknowledgements	vii
List of Abbreviations	viii
Introduction	1
Translation of Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle	43
Appendix 1: Unique Notices in Theophanes about Affairs in Syria and Palestine	310
Appendix 2: The Common Source of Theophilus' Chronicle and <i>Chron 819</i>	316
Appendix 3: The Missing Sections of Agapius from Ms Laurenziana Or 323	319
Gazetteer	324
Maps	
1. The Near East in Late Antiquity	334
2. Provinces of the Early Islamic Middle East	335
3. Syro-Mesopotamia in the Sixth–Eighth Centuries	336
Figures	
1. Transmission to and from Theophilus of Edessa	337
2. The Tribe of Quraysh	338
3. The Umayyad Caliphs	339
Bibliography	340
Index	358



For Sarah and Kylie

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was introduced to Theophilus of Edessa and the question of the 'eastern source' by Lawrence Conrad and Cyril Mango, two of the greatest living authorities on the historiography of the Late Antique and Early Islamic Near East. Both of them, in their different ways, awakened my interest in this field and made me aware of its complexities through many stimulating discussions. This happened in the 1990s, while I was still a doctoral student, but the matter never went beyond an appendix in the book version of my DPhil thesis. Recently, I came back to the question, because I was trying to write a socio-economic history of the Middle East *ca.* 600–800, and I soon came to realise that underlying much of the extant historical data about that time and place is Theophilus of Edessa's chronicle. Further investigation into the nature and scope of this text seemed, therefore, to be crucial and the result is the translation below. Such a work cannot provide a detailed study of any of the numerous events and topics covered by Theophilus and his dependants, but I hope that it will stimulate research into this unjustly neglected and little understood source. In the completion of this volume I was helped by the thoroughness of the readers, Mary Whitby, Andrew Marsham and particularly Sebastian Brock, and also benefited much from conversations with Roger Scott on Byzantine historiography, with David Taylor on Syriac *arcana*, and with Amikam Elad on early Abbasid politics. Finally, I am very grateful to Sarah Waidler for technical support, including the table of sources, and constant encouragement.

Heathrow  
29 November 2010

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCAG	Franz Cumont et al., <i>Catalogus codicum astrologorum graecorum</i>
Chron 1234	<i>Chronicle of 1234</i>
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Peeters)
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
EI	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
EIr	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i>
GAS	Fuat Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i>
GCAL	Georg Graf, <i>Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur</i>
JSAL	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Msy	Michael the Syrian
ODB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i>
Palmer, WSC	Andrew Palmer, <i>The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles</i>
PLRE	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
PMBZ	<i>Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinische Zeit</i>
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
TC	Theophilus' chronicle
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool University Press)

## INTRODUCTION

### to Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle:

### Its Historical and Literary Milieu, Dependents and Sources

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

The period from the end of the sixth century to the middle of the eighth century was one of quite dramatic events and major geopolitical changes in the Near East. It opened with the flight of the Persian emperor Khusrau II to the Byzantine emperor Maurice in Constantinople, seeking the latter's help against rival challengers at home. Maurice agreed to support Khusrau in his bid to recapture his throne, and the success of this move looked set to open a new era of peace and cooperation between these two superpowers. However, this expectation was dashed when Maurice was ousted in a coup by the general Phocas in 602. Khusrau, perhaps motivated in part by outrage on behalf of his erstwhile champion Maurice, but also substantially by opportunism, announced war and launched an all-out attack on the Byzantine empire. He was initially stunningly successful and by 626 all of Egypt and the Levant were in his hands and his armies were baying at the walls of Constantinople itself. However, Phocas had been overthrown in 610 by the energetic Heraclius, who struck back, not by countering all the different Persian contingents in the various provinces, but by marching eastwards into Armenia and then heading southwards to attack the Iraqi heartlands of the Persian realm. At Nineveh in 627 he won a resounding victory against one of Khusrau's top generals and the way was then open to him to march on the Persian capital directly, sacking royal residences as he went and putting the defeated and disgraced emperor Khusrau to flight.

Shiroi, Khusrau's son, made peace with Heraclius in 628 and agreed to restore to the Byzantines all of the lands seized by the Persian troops. Again, all looked set for an irenic future. In 630 Heraclius celebrated the triumph of the Christian world by restoring the relics of the cross of Jesus to Jerusalem,

<sup>1</sup> This overview is only meant as a brief introduction for the newcomer to this period and region, and so I do not give any references. For more information and suggested reading see the works cited in the relevant section of the translation below.



entering it in great pomp and ceremony only sixteen years after the city's sack at the hands of the Persians. But yet again these hopes were shattered. The Persian Empire descended into civil war, rival factions putting up their own candidates for the imperial office. Arab tribes took advantage of the chaos in the Persian sphere and the weakness in the Byzantine lands to launch major raids right across the Middle East. After a series of lightning campaigns lasting but a decade (633–42), they established a hold over the Byzantine provinces of Egypt and the Levant and the whole empire of Persia which they were never to relinquish. Possessing their own culture and faith, they felt no pressure to become assimilated after the fashion of the sackers of Rome, and their successes only made it clearer to them that they were on the right path: 'It is a sign of God's love for us and pleasure with our faith that he has given us dominion over all religions and all peoples.'<sup>2</sup> The Umayyads, the first Muslim dynasty (660–750), set about laying the foundations of a new empire from their capital at Damascus. They built new cities to house their troops, palaces for the elite, mosques for the faithful, and they renewed markets and undertook irrigation projects to stimulate the economy, all the while sending out armies to extend their dominion into Africa, Asia Minor and Central Asia. For the administration of their vast territories, competent managers were required and, since the Muslim rulers paid no heed to the birth or creed or rank of non-Arabs, there were great opportunities for advancement open to the able. Conversion was not essential – thus Athanasius bar Gümaye made his fortune as right-hand man to 'Abd al-'Aziz, the caliph 'Abd al-Malik's brother and governor of Egypt, while remaining a devout Christian – but it was nevertheless very common, especially among prisoners-of-war or émigrés to Muslim cities, who would have spent all their time among Muslims. Their entry into the Islamic fold, though a grief to their former co-religionaries, lent a tremendous variety and vitality to the nascent Muslim world since they came from all creeds and walks of life, and it meant that Byzantium came face to face with a new and vibrant civilisation taking shape within its own former provinces.

The confrontation of these two powers dominated Near Eastern politics for centuries. Initially each strove to vanquish the other totally. However, 'Abd al-Malik's construction of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, his minting of aniconic coins bearing the Muslim profession of faith and his moves to institute Arabic as the official language of the

<sup>2</sup> *Dispute between an Arab and a monk of the convent of Bet Hale*, Codex Diyarbekir 95, fol. 2a, cited in my *Seeing Islam*, 467.

new empire made it clear to all that the Muslim realm was to be no mere temporary phenomenon. Equally, the disastrous failure of the Muslims' great thrust to take Constantinople in the early eighth century demonstrated to them that the Byzantines were not so easily to be ousted. Subsequently, war in the field was often no more than a ritual display, and the battle became rather one of words.

At times it looked as though the Arabs' dominion in the Middle East might not endure, for they fought a number of civil wars among themselves during this period: in 656–61, 683–92 and 744–50. The first was sparked off by the murder of the third caliph 'Uthman by veteran warriors angry at being shortchanged in favour of newcomers and at his nepotistic style of rule, and then continued as a contest over who would be the fourth caliph: Mu'awiya, a kinsman of 'Uthman, or 'Ali, the son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad. The second and third civil wars were in part a fight for the caliphate between rival families of the tribe of Quraysh and in part a dispute over the nature of Islam and its role in public life. In the course of the third civil war one particular family of Quraysh, the Abbasids, took advantage of the infighting among the Umayyad family to seize control, with the aid of troops from eastern Iran. This change of dynasty was momentous, for it led to the transfer of the capital of the Muslim Arab Empire from Syria to Iraq. Whereas the Umayyad realm, based in Damascus, was strongly influenced by Byzantine provincial economic and cultural models, the new regime looked eastwards, finding its inspiration in Iran and Central Asia. It was in a sense the Persian Empire reborn as a monotheist power; its new capital, Baghdad, was even located no more than a stone's throw from the old Persian seat of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Once it had been the Byzantine and Persian empires that were described as the 'twin eyes' of the east; now it was the Byzantine and Islamic empires, as was noted by the Byzantine patriarch Nicholas to the caliph Muqtadir (908–32): 'The two powers of the whole universe, the power of the Arabs and that of the Romans, stand out and radiate as the two great luminaries in the firmament; for this reason alone we must live in common as brothers although we differ in customs, manners and religion.'<sup>3</sup> Yet the Arabs, at least up to the time covered by this book (*ca.* 750s), maintained fairly unitary control over an area far greater than the Persian Empire had ever held, in modern terms from Morocco to Afghanistan. And the Byzantine Empire hardly deserved that name, retaining sover-

<sup>3</sup> Cited by P. Charanis in his review of Vasiliev's *Byzance et les Arabes*, *Speculum* 45 (1970), 501.



eignty over little more than Asia Minor and the Balkans. Whereas the Arabs had to wrestle with the problem of how to govern such a vast kingdom effectively, the Byzantines had to struggle with the question of how to make do with such curtailed territories.

### HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Byzantinists tend to view the period from 630 to the 750s as a historiographical desert and speak of it as a 'long silence' or 'long gap'.<sup>4</sup> This is in part because history-writing in the sixth century had enjoyed a considerable measure of vitality. All the three main genres were well represented: secular classicising history (Procopius, Agathias, Menander, John of Epiphaneia and Theophylact Simocatta), church history (Zosimus, John of Ephesus and Evagrius) and the world chronicle (John Malalas and John of Antioch).<sup>5</sup> And it is also in part because there are almost no extant historical texts for this period; its events are of course charted by later historians, but the works they depend on do not in general survive.

Because of this historiographical dearth, it seems worthwhile to try and recover one text that was definitely composed at this time, the chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa, an astrologer in the Abbasid court in Iraq in the second half of the eighth century. It has become accepted of late to identify Theophilus' chronicle with the so-called 'eastern source', the existence of which had been postulated from the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> This conclusion had been arrived at from careful comparison of three later Christian chroniclers: the Byzantine monk Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818), the

4 Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, 340, 348. For a survey of what history was being written in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, and a consideration of why it was curtailed, see Whitby, 'Greek Historical Writing after Procopius'. See also my *Seeing Islam*, ch. 10, which I draw upon here.

5 For the historiography of this period see Croke and Emmett, *History and Historians in Late Antiquity*, ch. 1; Croke, 'Byzantine Chronicle Writing'; Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, chs. 6–9; Debié, *L'écriture de l'histoire en syriaque*.

6 See especially Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad' (Conrad, 'Theophanes', 5–6, refers to earlier literature), and Borrut, *Entre Mémoire et Pouvoir*, 143 n. 52. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, 192–236, assesses the worth of Theophilus, but without discussing its composition/transmission. Shortly before I was due to submit this book, I was put in contact by Glen Bowersock with a student of his, Maria Conterno, who was about to submit a PhD thesis on the 'eastern source', but we decided, since we were both at a very advanced stage in our respective projects, that it would be better to complete them independently. Maria's work will undoubtedly be an important re-evaluation of the 'eastern source'.

West Syrian patriarch Dionysius of Telmahre (d. 845),<sup>7</sup> and Agapius, bishop of the north Syrian city of Manbij (wr. 940s).<sup>8</sup> The latter, who relies very heavily upon the 'eastern source' for the period 630–750s, states explicitly that he has drawn upon the 'books'<sup>9</sup> of Theophilus of Edessa:

Theophilus the Astrologer, from whom we took these accounts, said: 'I was myself a constant witness of these wars and I would write things down so that nothing of them escaped me.' He has many books about that and we have abbreviated from them this book. We added to it what we perceived to be indispensable, but we avoided prolixity.<sup>10</sup>

Dionysius of Telmahre also names Theophilus as one of his informants:

One of these writers (who wrote 'narratives resembling ecclesiastical history') was Theophilus of Edessa, a Chalcedonian who regarded it as his birthright to loathe the Orthodox (...)<sup>11</sup> We shall take from the writings of this man some details here and there from those parts which are reliable and do not deviate from the truth.<sup>12</sup>

7 Though not extant, Dionysius' work is heavily drawn upon by Michael the Syrian (d. 1199) and the anonymous chronicler of AD 1234 (see the sections dealing with these two authors below).

8 Brooks, 'Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers'; Becker, 'Eine neue christliche Quelle'; Conrad, 'Theophanes', 43. Manbij is the Arabic name of the city; the Syriac name is Mabbug and it was known to Greek-speakers as Hierapolis.

9 Arabic *kutub*, a quite general term that one could also simply translate as 'writings'.

10 Agapius, 525. The wars in question are those between the Arab dynasties of the Umayyads and the Abbasids, and Agapius wants to add weight to his narrative by noting that it derives from an eyewitness. However, that Theophilus' 'many books' dealt with Christian as well as Muslim history may be inferred from Dionysius' remark that Theophilus' writings sometimes misrepresented the Miaphysites.

11 For Eastern Christians the question of orthodoxy/heresy mostly turned on the problem of Christ's nature. The Miaphysites (or Monophysites; Copts in Egypt, Jacobites in Syria) wished not to dilute the divinity of Christ and so insisted on one divine nature, the human and divine elements having fused at the incarnation. The Nestorians (or East Syrian Christians), found chiefly in Iraq and Persia, wanted to hold on to the very comforting fact that Christ had become a human being like us and to avoid saying that God had suffered and died, and so stressed two distinct natures, a human and a divine. Trying desperately to eschew the two extremes of denial of Christ's humanity and dualism, the Chalcedonians (or Melkites), who represented the imperial position, postulated two natures, united but distinct. Each group would tend to refer to themselves as the Orthodox. Though important in their own right, these confessional divisions were also bound up with regional, ethnic and linguistic affiliations. See further Atiya, *Eastern Christianity*, and Meyendorff, *Eastern Christian Thought*.

12 Michael the Syrian (henceforth Msyr) 10.XX, 378/358; see below for further discussion of this passage.



The fact that Theophilus of Edessa is indeed known to have penned 'a fine work of history'<sup>13</sup> has been regarded as proof positive that Theophilus is the author of the 'eastern source'. The situation is a little more complex than this, as will be shown later on in this introduction, but I will first give the reader some insight into the life of this important character and present the writers who used his chronicle and those whom Theophilus himself might have relied upon to compile it.

### THEOPHILUS' LIFE AND WORKS

If we can believe an anecdote that relates how he died within a few days of the caliph Mahdi (775–85), at the age of ninety, then Theophilus was born in 695 in, as his name suggests, the city of Edessa in northern Syria.<sup>14</sup> In a letter to his son, who bore the very classical name of Deukalion, he implies that he is accompanying the future caliph Mahdi on a campaign in the east, presumably acting as his astrological adviser:

I was urged, as you know, by those holding power to undertake these things (i.e. write a treatise on military forecasts) at the time when we made the expedition with them to the east in the province of *Margianēs* (i.e. Margiana, the Merw oasis).<sup>15</sup>

Thereafter he remained in the service of Mahdi, becoming chief astrologer during his reign and taking up residence in Baghdad.<sup>16</sup> His scientific writings have been fragmentarily preserved and very little studied, so we cannot yet be certain of what he wrote.<sup>17</sup> Very popular was his *Peri katarchōn*

<sup>13</sup> Bar Hebraeus, CS, 127; MD, 220.

<sup>14</sup> Bar Hebraeus, CS, 126–27; MD, 219–20.

<sup>15</sup> Cumont, CCAG 5.1, 234. A second edition of this work contains a chapter *De stellis fixis* which gives a planetary conjunction correct for 768 (Cumont, CCAG 5.1, 212). The campaign must, therefore, be before 768 and very likely refers to Mahdi's activities in AH 141/758–59 in Khurasan, quelling the revolt of its governor 'Abd al-Jabbar with the help of Khazim ibn Khuzayma, and in Tabaristan (Tabari, 3.134–37).

<sup>16</sup> Ibn al-Qifti, 109; Cumont, CCAG, 1.130 (an astronomical calculation made by Theophilus at Baghdad).

<sup>17</sup> Cumont, CCAG 5.1, 229 n. 32; Breydy, 'Das Chronikon des Maroniten Theophilus ibn Tuma', though note that he incorrectly identifies Theophilus with the author of a Maronite chronicle; the labelling of Theophilus as Maronite begins only with Bar Hebraeus (but is accepted by most modern scholars – e.g. Conrad, 'Theophanes, 43; 'The Conquest of Arwad', 331; 'The *Mawālī*', 388), whereas earlier writers, such as Dionysius of Telmahre, just call him Chaldeonian. See also PMBZ, 'Theophilus' 8183.

*polemikōn* ('On Military Forecasts'), which was cited by later Muslim astrologers and chapters of which made their way to Byzantium to become incorporated in a mid-ninth century collection of astrological writings.<sup>18</sup> Astrology was evidently his passion, for in the preface to the second edition of the aforementioned work, addressed to his son Deukalion, he defends it vociferously against those who would slander its name, among whom 'church leaders' were the most conspicuous.<sup>19</sup> However, he also found time for other learned pursuits, and is said to have translated into Syriac Galen's *On the Method of Maintaining Good Health*,<sup>20</sup> Homer's *Iliad* and possibly Aristotle's *Sophistici*.<sup>21</sup>

### Theophilus' Dependants

I should emphasise at the outset that by using the term 'dependants' I do not mean that the authors below used Theophilus' chronicle in a slavish manner. Indeed, one of the key conclusions to be drawn from the translation below is that while it is clear that Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius relied substantially on a single common source, they nevertheless felt free to creatively revise and reshape it, to abbreviate and reword it, and to supplement it with material from other sources.

#### 1. Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818; writing in Greek)

Theophanes was born in 760 to noble and rich parents. His father, governor of the region by the Aegean Sea, died while his son was still young. As heir to extensive estates in Bithynia and a considerable fortune, Theophanes spent his youth in 'hunting and riding' and married a woman of comparable wealth. He entered imperial service with the rank of groom and was assigned the task of superintending the rebuilding of the fortifications at Cyzicus on the southern side of the Sea of Marmara. He would undoubtedly

<sup>18</sup> This is the so-called *Synatagma Laurentianum*, on which see Boll, 'Überlieferungsgeschichte', 88–110. For Muslim references to Theophilus see Sezgin, GAS, 7.49–50; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimmiswissenschaften*, 302; Rosenthal, 'From Arabic Books', 454–55 (cf. Cumont, CCAG, 1.83).

<sup>19</sup> Cumont, CCAG, 5.1, 234–38; discussed in Beck, *Vorsehung und Vorherbestimmung*, 70.

<sup>20</sup> Bergstrasser, *Hunain ibn Ishaq*, §84, though this could possibly be a different Theophilus of Edessa.

<sup>21</sup> Homer: Bar Hebraeus, CS, 127; MD, 220; and see Conrad, 'The *Mawālī*', 388–89. Aristotle: both Ibn al-Nadim and 'Isa ibn Zur'a refer to a translation of Aristotle's *Sophistici elenchi* by a certain Theophilus (*Thāwufīlā*), taken to be Theophilus of Edessa by Peters, *Aristoteles arabus*, 25.



information on both Byzantine and Arab affairs. For the latter he is heavily dependent upon the 'eastern source' for the period 630–740s. Even after this date, however, Theophanes continues to narrate events occurring in Muslim-ruled lands, until *ca.* 780. Either he made use of another chronicle for these three decades or, more likely, he had at his disposal a continuation of the 'eastern source'.<sup>27</sup> The preponderance of material concerning Syria and Palestine suggests that the continuator was from that region.<sup>28</sup> Most of the very few entries in Theophanes for the period 630–740s that are not from the 'eastern source' are also concerned with Syria and Palestine, so it is likely that this continuator was a redactor as well, inserting the occasional entry within the text of the 'eastern source'.<sup>29</sup> The addition of notices on the succession of the Melkite patriarchs of Antioch in the years 742–56 implies that this continuator/redactor was a Melkite clergyman. It is quite possible that it was George Syncellus himself who did this work. We know he was based in Palestine for a time, at one of the monasteries in the Judaean desert,<sup>30</sup> and he specifically states that, in addition to the material of earlier historians, he added 'a few events which happened in our own times' (quoted in full above). This suggestion is not in the end provable, but it is plausible and is a very neat and economical solution.

When compared to Agapius and Dionysius, it becomes immediately apparent that the 'eastern source', as he appears in Theophanes, has been substantially abbreviated and his notices have sometimes been amalgamated, thus creating a causal link between events that seem originally to have been unconnected.<sup>31</sup> This compression is probably a consequence of Theophanes' bias for Byzantine affairs and should not be attributed to the continuator.<sup>32</sup>

27 It does not seem likely that the 'eastern source' itself continued until 780, for the chronicles of Agapius and Dionysius no longer share any notices with Theophanes after the 740s.

28 See Appendix 1 below; Brooks, 'Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers', 587; Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad', 336–38.

29 E.g. Theophanes, 328 (Heraclius visits Tiberias), 335–36 (battle of Mu'ta), 348 (death of Thomas, bishop of Apamea, and the burning of the bishop of Hims), 412 (Iraqis burn the markets of Damascus).

30 Thus regarding Rachel's tomb situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem he says (*Chronographia*, 122 [trans. Adler and Tuffin, 153]): 'In my journeys to Bethlehem and what is known as the Old Laura of blessed Chariton I personally have passed by there frequently and seen her coffin lying there on the ground'. See also Mango, 'Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?', 13 n. 16; Huxley, 'Erudition', 215–16.

31 E.g. Theophanes, 365 ('Abd al-Malik's minting of coins and Justinian's breaking of the peace), 399 (earthquake in Syria and 'Umar II's banning of wine).

32 It was probably Theophanes too who chose to compress the account of the Arab-Persian confrontation into one short notice.

## 2. *Dionysius of Telmahre (d. 845; writing in Syriac)*

Dionysius came from a wealthy and well-established Edessan family. He studied at the monasteries of Qenneshre and of Mar Jacob at Kayshum before being elevated to the position of patriarch of the West Syrian church in 818, which position he held until his death in 845.<sup>33</sup> At the request of John, metropolitan of Dara, he consented to undertake what others, despite his exhortations, had declined to do, namely 'to set down in writing for the generations which are to come the events which have occurred (in the past) and which are occurring in our own time'.<sup>34</sup> The finished product was described by a later chronicler as follows:

He composed it in two parts and in sixteen books, each part containing eight books divided into chapters. He wrote it at the request of John, metropolitan of Dara. In this chronicle are included the times, a period of 260 years, from the beginning of the reign of Maurice – that is, from the year 894 of the Greeks (582) – until the year 1154 (842) in which there died Theophilus, emperor of the Romans, and Abu Ishaq (Mu'tasim), king of the Arabs.<sup>35</sup>

This division into parts – one devoted to church history, the other to secular history – and books and chapters indicates a sophisticated approach that differs from that found in earlier Syriac historiography. In his preface Dionysius characterises his work as a *pragmateia*, a term used by classical writers to mean a treatise strictly and systematically formulated, and he distances himself from those who 'composed their narratives in a summary and fragmented fashion without preserving either chronological accuracy or the order of succession of events'. In contrast to such writings, he says, 'Our aim is to bring together in this book everything which our feeble self is able, with God's assistance, to collect, and to ascertain the accuracy (of each report) as attested by many persons worthy of credence, to select (the best version) and then to write it down in (correct) order'.<sup>36</sup>

Bar a few fragments, Dionysius' achievement unfortunately does not

33 Abramowski, *Dionysius von Telmahre*, discusses the Church and its relationship with the state in Dionysius' time and also Dionysius' own contribution as patriarch.

34 Msyr 10.XX, 378/358 (Dionysius' preface).

35 Msyr 12.XXI, 544/111.

36 Msyr 11.XVIII, 454/487–88. This is a literal rendering; the translation of Palmer, WSC, 94–95, makes it clearer: 'Weak as I am, my aim is as follows: To collect with the help of God whatever information I can find and to put it all in this book in good order, selecting the most reliable version of events attested by the majority of trustworthy witnesses and writing them down here in the correct sequence.' For more detailed discussion of the format of Dionysius' chronicle see Conrad, 'Syriac Perspectives', 28–39; Palmer, WSC, 85–104.



survive.<sup>37</sup> Much can, however, be recovered by comparing the writings of those who later drew upon it, notably the West Syrian patriarch Michael the Syrian (1166–99) and an anonymous Edessan chronicler of the early thirteenth century whose work is referred to simply as the *Chronicle of 1234*, since that is the year in which it stops.<sup>38</sup> These two authors were compiling their chronicles within a decade of one another and yet would seem to have been working independently. Both explicitly cite Dionysius a number of times,<sup>39</sup> and Michael implies that Dionysius was his only substantial source for the period 582–842. We can, therefore, be reasonably sure that every notice common to both writers in this period derives from Dionysius. However, neither of these two passes his *oeuvre* on to us intact; rather, they both add, omit, abbreviate, rephrase and reshape.<sup>40</sup> Michael breaks up the text of Dionysius and distributes the material over three columns devoted to ecclesiastical affairs, natural phenomena and civil history. The *Chronicle of 1234* has one continuous narrative until the time of Constantine and then divides its notices into secular and church history, relegating the latter to the end. Michael's ecclesiastical column is extensive, but much of this is treated as civil history by the chronicler of 1234, whose church history is relatively small.<sup>41</sup> It seems likely that Dionysius, given his position as patriarch, would have deemed his ecclesiastical history the more important and so given it greater space, but it is difficult to say for sure.

In the preface to his work Dionysius states that he would take from Theophilus of Edessa 'only those parts which are reliable and do not deviate

37 These fragments are edited and translated by Abramowski, *Dionysius von Telmahre*, 130–44. A few brief citations from Dionysius are also given by Elias of Nisibis, 1.174–80 (AH 138, 140, 142, 146, 152–53).

38 For these two authors and their chronicles see Chabot's and Fiey's introduction to their translations of Michael and the *Chronicle of 1234* respectively, and most recently Weltecke, 'Les trois grandes chroniques syro-orthodoxes'.

39 *Chron 1234*, 2.17–20, 257, 267; for the numerous references of Michael to Dionysius see Conrad, 'Syriac Perspectives', 30 and n. 87 thereto.

40 At different times each will have a longer account than the other; since historical information about the seventh and eighth centuries was scarce, it is unlikely that either was able to add new details, so they must both at times be abbreviating. An example of how they both rework Dionysius is given by Brock, 'Syriac Life of Maximus', 337–40, and it is made very clear in my translation below.

41 E.g. Cyrus' part in the conquest of Egypt, the Jews' removal of crosses from the Mount of Olives and the appearance of a false Tiberius (see translation below). Though there are occasions when the reverse is true; e.g. the notice on the Arab attack on the convent of Simeon the Stylite is in the ecclesiastical part of *Chron 1234*, 2.260, but in the civil section of Msyr 11.VI, 417/422.

from the truth'. The reason for this proviso is the rivalry in their faith, Dionysius being a Miaphysite and Theophilus a Chalcedonian. In reality, however, Dionysius conveys to us more of Theophilus than either Theophanes or Agapius, albeit only through the filters of Michael and the *Chronicle of 1234*. Most of the notices in Michael's civil history column for the period 630–750 have a counterpart in Theophanes and Agapius, and so most clearly represent Theophilus; but many of Michael's notices on natural phenomena and almost all of the ecclesiastical reports derive from elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> The *Chronicle of 1234* has often been thought to best preserve Dionysius, and so Theophilus. This is true to the extent that it often quotes Dionysius in full and does not break up the narrative structure into subject categories as Michael does. Yet on closer study it proves to be quite an eclectic work. For example, it dislikes short notices, preferring to have a paragraph's worth before accepting a report. And for the Arab conquests and the first Arab civil war it turns to Muslim sources, not merely supplementing, but borrowing wholesale.<sup>43</sup> Except for these two occasions, however, almost of all of its notices on civil affairs would seem to derive from Theophilus.

It is evident that Dionysius produced a comprehensive and carefully structured work. The church history takes centre stage, coming first and comprising a formidable array of documents; the secular history follows, smaller in size, but great efforts were made to assemble as much material as possible. The two parts, assigned eight books each, were then cross-referenced and otherwise linked by glimpses forward and flashbacks, and the whole was set forth in a fluid and florid Syriac diction.<sup>44</sup> For Islamicists it is valuable as the best witness to Theophilus of Edessa's chronicle and for revealing to us something of the life and conditions of the Christians, who still constituted a majority of the population of the Near East in Dionysius' day.

42 Michael also reports a number of censuses, seemingly not drawn from Theophilus; e.g. ca. 668 Abu l-A'war made a census of Christian labourers/soldiers for the first time (Msyr 11.XII, 435/450); in AG 1009/698 'Atiyya made a census of foreigners (Msyr 11.XVI, 447/473; *Chron 819*, 13).

43 This is important to note; I had myself, taking over received wisdom that the *Chronicle of 1234* accurately represented Dionysius (e.g. Palmer, WSC, 102: 'I assume that the *Chronicle of 1234* preserves Dionysius faithfully'), accepted that the Arabic material was inserted by Dionysius (see Hoyland, 'Arabic, Syriac and Greek Historiography'). However, since not a single item of it is found in Michael, this cannot be so and must have become included in the *Chronicle of 1234* at a later date.

44 See Palmer, WSC, 85–89, for references and further discussion.



### 3. Agapius, bishop of Manbij (wr. 940s; writing in Arabic)

The earliest manuscript of this author's chronicle, Sinai Arab 580 of the late tenth century,<sup>45</sup> assigns it the following title: 'The book of history, the composition of Mahbub son of Constantine the Byzantine of Manbij, the title of which is (dedicated) to the man crowned with the virtues of wisdom, versed in the ways of philosophy, commended by the truths of knowledge, righteous and benevolent, Abu Musa 'Isa son of Husayn.'<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately we know nothing about the latter character and very little about Agapius (the Greek equivalent of Mahbub) himself beyond what is in the heading.<sup>47</sup> His work begins with Creation and halts abruptly at the end of the reign of Leo IV (775–80), but he would seem to have continued until ca. 942, since at one point he states that 'the kingdom of the Arabs' has endured for 330 years.<sup>48</sup> The work was known to the Muslim polymath Mas'udi (d. 956), who deemed it one of the best books he had seen by the Melkites on history.<sup>49</sup>

Agapius has very little information for the years 630–750s that is not drawn from Theophilus of Edessa. The only other source that we can detect is a Muslim history, which is revealed from the occasional provision of a Hijri date or the full name of a Muslim authority, and also from notices such as who led the pilgrimage in certain years and who the governors were for a particular caliph.<sup>50</sup> He would also seem to be dipping into it for certain events of key importance to the political life of the Muslims, especially their

45 See Gibson, 'Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts', 123–24; Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai*, 23.

46 The Bodleian manuscript (Hunt 478 dated 1320) misses out a few words of the title, giving simply: 'The book of the title crowned...' (*Kitāb al-'unwān al-mukallal...*) and this is how the work has come to be known (i.e. as the 'Book of the Title'/*Kitāb al-'Unwān*).

47 Such information as we do have about him is collected by Vasiliev, 'Agapij Manbidjskij'; see also Graf, *GCAL*, 2.39–41, and Nasrallah, *Mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite* 2.2, 50–52.

48 Agapius, 456. The year AH 330 corresponds to 941–42; this is equated by Agapius to AG 1273, but a marginal note says 'it is wrong', and indeed it should read AG 1253.

49 Mas'udi, 154.

50 E.g. Agapius, 474 ('Umar replaced Khalid with Abu 'Ubayda as commander of Syria), 476 ('Umar appointed Abu 'Ubayda over Egypt in addition to Syria), 477 ('Umar named Mu'awiya governor of Syria in place of Abu 'Ubayda), 483 ('Uthman led the pilgrimage in the eighth year of his reign), 485 ('Abdallah ibn 'Abbas led the pilgrimage in the year of 'Uthman's murder), 487 (Mu'awiya's governors), 488 (Marwan ibn al-Hakam led the pilgrimage, 'Amr ibn al-'As died). Also the notice on Mu'awiya's capture of Rhodes, which adds details to Theophilus' account, may derive from this Muslim chronology (see Conrad, 'Arabs and the Colossus', 173).

various civil wars.<sup>51</sup> In addition, it may underlie his chronology, for most of his notices are dated according to the years of the reigning caliph. As regards his use of Theophilus, Agapius is rather erratic, sometimes quoting him at length, at other times abbreviating him considerably.

### 4. The Chronicle of Siirt (written in Arabic)

This text, so called because the manuscript was discovered in the town of southern Turkey bearing that name, narrates the history of the saints and patriarchs of the Nestorian church, and the principal events of the Roman, Persian and Arab empires that impinged upon it. Its interest for us is somewhat limited since the two volumes that contain the work are both defective at the beginning and end: it starts abruptly in 251, has a lacuna in the middle corresponding to the years 423–83, and halts mid-sentence in 650.<sup>52</sup> It presumably began with Jesus, demonstrating the continuity of the Eastern Church with Christianity's fount. How far it extended is less easy to say. The mention of place names such as Baghdad (founded in 762), Samarra (830s) and Jazirat ibn 'Umar (founded by and named after Hasan ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattab al-Taghlibi, d. ca. 865), and the reference to Mosul as the seat of a metropolitan (from 820s) take us to the late ninth century.<sup>53</sup>

Further indications can be gleaned from the sources that the chronicler names at intervals. The *Ecclesiastical History* of Daniel bar Maryam, a contemporary of the patriarch Isho'yahb III (d. 658), is cited five times, and that of two other approximate contemporaries, Elias of Merw and Bar Sahde, are cited two and three times respectively. The works of the eighth-century theologian Shahdust, bishop of Tirhan, and the biographies compiled by the patriarch Isho' bar Nun (824–28) are each excerpted twice. And the Chalcedonian philosopher and physician Qusta ibn Luqa, who died some time in the reign of the caliph Muqtadir (907–32), is cited four times, bringing us into the tenth century.<sup>54</sup> A *terminus ante quem* is given by the observation

51 It is, however, very difficult to determine the content of Theophilus' account of the first civil war, since his dependants each have very different accounts (see the entry thereon in the translation below).

52 On the manuscripts of this work see Degen, 'Zwei Miszellen zur Chronik von Se'ert', 84–91.

53 Fiey, 'Isho'denah et la Chronique de Séert', 455; note that the text of Muhammad's pact with the Christians of Najran was said to have been discovered in AH 265/879 (*Chron Siirt* CII, PO 13, 601).

54 References and further literature on each are given by Sako, 'Les sources de la Chronique de Séert', where other minor sources are noted, though not Theophilus of Edessa.



that Isho'yahb III was the last head of the church to bear this name,<sup>55</sup> which means that the work antedates the appointment of Isho'yahb IV in 1020. The *Chronicle of Siirt* was, therefore, composed between 907 and 1020.

A source not cited by the chronicler is the work of Theophilus of Edessa. Unfortunately, since the *Chronicle of Siirt* breaks off in 650, we do not have much material for comparison with Theophilus, but there are a few notices that reveal close correspondence: the pact between Heraclius and Nicetas to depose Phocas (AD 610), the rift between Khusrau and Shahrbaraz (ca. 626), Khusrau's dispatch of Rozbihan against Heraclius (627), a sign in the sky ca. 634 and 'Umar's building activity in Jerusalem ca. 642 (all cited in the translation section below). However, for the first three notices, which occur before the Arab conquests, we cannot be sure whether they go back to Theophilus or to some other source that Agapius and Dionysius have in common, such as the Sergius of Rusafa whom Dionysius names as a source for this period (see below) and who may have been accessible to the chronicler of Siirt. The sign in the sky is a brief entry that is likely to travel easily between chronicles, so we are only left with the account of 'Umar's building activity in Jerusalem. This is quite close to the narratives of Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius (see the entry thereon in the translation section below), but as a single notice it does not give us a sufficient basis for assessing how much and in what way the *Chronicle of Siirt* used Theophilus.

##### 5. The Byzantine-Arab Chronicler of 741 (written in Latin)

This is a somewhat odd composition. Its content is as follows:

*Spanish affairs* (9%): six cursory references to Visigothic kings (§§1–3, 5, 9, 14), dated according to the Spanish era, from the death of Reccared in 602 to the accession of Suinthila in 621. The Spanish dating era is no longer used after 640. The conquest of Spain is only mentioned among other triumphs of Walid's reign (§36), but there is an entry devoted to the battle of Toulouse in 721 (§42). *Byzantine affairs* (29%): brief notices on the emperors from the death of Phocas in 610 to the accession of Leo III in 717; only Heraclius receives any substantial treatment (62% of Byzantine notices; 18% of all notices). *Arab affairs* (62%): this is the major component of the chronicle and comprises entries on each ruler from Muhammad until Yazid II (720–24), giving the length and events of their reigns and often some personal description.

The initial references to Visigothic kings are drawn from Isidore of Seville's *History of the Goths*, but it can hardly be regarded as a continuation of

<sup>55</sup> *Chron Siirt* LIV, 460.

Isidore since it concerns itself thereafter only with eastern rather than western rulers. One might instead see the work as a continuation of John of Biclar's *Chronicle*, which, as a contribution to the universal chronicle tradition, had a more eastern focus than Isidore's history and ended in the reign of Reccared, with whose death the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741* begins. Moreover, both place the Byzantine emperors in a numerical scheme that goes back to Augustus. But the almost total absence of Spanish material, which John of Biclar does include in some measure, makes impossible any strict alignment with the Spanish historiographical tradition.<sup>56</sup>

The second distinctive feature of the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741* is its favourable attitude towards the Arab caliphs, and not only towards the more renowned ones such as Mu'awiya and 'Abd al-Malik. Thus, though noting that he had little success in war, it characterises Yazid I as:

A most pleasant man and deemed highly agreeable by all the peoples subject to his rule. He never, as is the wont of men, sought glory for himself because of his royal rank, but lived as a citizen along with all the common people (§28).<sup>57</sup>

The chronicler evidently relies upon a Near Eastern source, and this must have been composed in Syria, since the Umayyad caliphs are each described in a relatively positive vein, all reference to 'Ali is omitted, Mu'awiya II is presented as a legitimate and uncontested ruler (§29) and the rebel Yazid ibn al-Muhallab is labelled 'a font of wickedness' (§41). Another chronicle from eighth-century Spain, the *Hispanic Chronicle of 754*,<sup>58</sup> also makes use

<sup>56</sup> See Diaz y Diaz, 'La transmisión textual del Biclarense', 66–67; Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 1–10 (John of Biclar), 11–24 (Isidore of Seville), 25–42 (*Chron Byz-Arab 741*).

<sup>57</sup> There is some parallel here with the short biographies of caliphs given by Muslim histories at the end of a ruler's reign; e.g. Tabari, 2.1271: 'In the view of the people of Syria, Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik was the most excellent of their caliphs. He built mosques – the mosque of Damascus and the mosque of Medina – and set up pulpits, was bountiful to the people and gave to the lepers, telling them not to beg from the people. To every cripple he gave a servant and to every blind person a guide. During his rule extensive conquests were achieved: Musa ibn Nusayr conquered Andalus, Qutayba conquered Kashgar and Muhammad ibn al-Qasim conquered Hind.'

<sup>58</sup> This chronicle is much more straightforward. It follows in the footsteps of John of Biclar, for the scope of both is Mediterranean-wide but with an Iberian focus, and both treat matters ecclesiastical and secular. The author, an Andalusian cleric, generally disparages the emirs of Spain and makes clear his antipathy towards the invaders: 'Even if every limb were transformed into a tongue it would be beyond human nature to express the ruin of Spain and its many and great evils' (§45). See Pereira, *Crónica mozárabe de 754*; Barkai, *Cristianos y musulmanes en la España medieval*, 19–27; Collins, *Arab Conquest of Spain*, 57–65; Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 28–45.



of this Syrian source, and a comparison between the two Latin texts makes clear that it must have dealt with both Arab and Byzantine rulers – though the latter much more briefly – and was more extensive than either of its transmitters, both of which abbreviate it, at times substantially. One would expect this Syrian source to have been in Greek, since that was the usual language of exchange between east and west, and there are a few parallels between it and Byzantine chronicles.<sup>59</sup> Yet as regards Arab rulers, no Greek source displays such a positive attitude towards them as the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741*. Dubler suggested it was written by a Spanish convert to Islam, but no Muslim would portray the rise of Islam as a rebellion, and surely no convert would refrain from passing some comment upon his newly adopted faith. The Syrian source of the Latin texts reports many of the same events and halts at the same point (ca. 750) as the common source of Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius of Telmahre, and it is tempting to postulate that the Spanish chroniclers are dependent on a Latin translation of this common source. However, there are very few textual parallels<sup>60</sup> (though this could just be because the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle* is heavily abbreviating his Syrian source) and Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius have much material not found in the Spanish texts.

A brief comment is required concerning the date of the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741*. The concluding notice is as follows:

Then Yazid, king of the Saracens, his fourth year having unfolded, departed from this life, leaving the rule to his brother, Hisham by name; and he determined that after his brother the one born of his (Yazid's) own seed, named Walid, should rule (§43).

This takes us only to 724 and no later event is narrated, nor is the length of Hisham's reign given.<sup>61</sup> It is because the entry on Leo III's accession (in 717)

<sup>59</sup> Parallels are indicated and sources discussed by Dubler, 'La crónica arabigo-bizantina de 741', 298–333, who, however, exaggerates both the similarities with other chronicles and the number of sources that would be circulating in Byzantium and Spain in the seventh century. In the opinion of Nöldeke, 'Epimetrum', the Syrian source was composed in Greek by a Miaphysite of Syria. An additional argument in favour of a Greek intermediary is the similarity in the rendering of Arab names between the two Latin texts and a short chronology of AD 818 in Greek (Schoene, *Eusebii chronicorum libri duo*, Appendix IV).

<sup>60</sup> As opposed to notices on the same subject; such textual parallels as do exist are presented in the translation below.

<sup>61</sup> Collins, *Arab Conquest of Spain*, 55, infers that the text must date to 744 or that the final notice was added later, not realising that the accession of Walid II after Hisham (d. 743) was pre-arranged by Yazid II. Collins' discussion of the text (53–57) is nevertheless very helpful.

contains the remark 'he took up the sceptre for 24 years' (i.e. until 741) that the text is associated with the year 741. But this suggests that the chronicler had intended to proceed further. The notices on Arab affairs in the *Hispanic Chronicle of 754* carry on in much the same vein until ca. 750, concluding with the accession to power of the Abbasids, and it is simpler to assume that the author is still relying on the same Syrian source rather than to posit some other Near Eastern source for the period 724–50. It may be, then, that we have the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741* in a curtailed form and that it too originally continued until ca. 750.<sup>62</sup>

### THEOPHILUS' CHRONICLE

From a comparison of Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius it becomes immediately apparent that their notices for the seventh and eighth century follow a chronological order. A few are misplaced, but the intention was clearly to progress through history from some point in the past up until the author's own day. Yet it is also evident from the frequency with which Dionysius and Agapius either begin a notice with 'at this time' or else disagree with each other on dating that Theophilus' work was not annalistic and was indeed rather sparing with dates.<sup>63</sup> This is an important point, for modern scholars often rely upon Theophanes for ascertaining the date of an event. But it is because he is writing an annalistic work that he puts notices under specific years, not necessarily because these notices were dated in the sources he is using. And in the case of the notices on eastern affairs, Theophanes often had to place them just where he thought best.

What the start and end point were for Theophilus is a difficult question. Since he is quoted as saying that there were 5197 years separating Adam from Seleucus, Theophilus is usually thought to have made Creation his starting point. But this is hardly cogent, for as an astrologer he would often have been obliged to make chronological calculations, or it could well be that

<sup>62</sup> Though the observation that 'it is a descendant of the son of the latter (Marwan ibn al-Hakam) who holds their leadership up till now in our times' (§31) suggests that the chronicler is writing while the Marwanids are still in power, unless the reference is to the fact that Spain was governed by a descendant of Marwan.

<sup>63</sup> Theophilus may have proceeded by simply narrating events, arranging his entries in chronological order as far as possible and occasionally giving synchronisms after the fashion of Eusebius; e.g. 'In the year 34/35/37 of the Arabs, 10/13 of Constans and 9 of 'Uthman, Mu'awiya prepared a naval expedition against Constantinople' (Theophanes, 345; Agapius, 483; Msyr 11.XI, 430/445; *Chron* 1234, 274).



he prefaced his chronography with some such computation.<sup>64</sup> Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius are clearly dependent on a common source from the notice on Abu Bakr's despatch of four generals in 634 onwards. Before this time Theophanes is able to obtain fairly full coverage from Byzantine sources and only occasionally has notices in common with Dionysius and Agapius. The first such notice concerns the Persians' crossing of the Euphrates *ca.* 610 to capture Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia. Dionysius and Agapius do share some notices for the years 590–610 (see in the translation below the accounts of the flight of Khusrau II to Maurice in 590 and Phocas' removal of Maurice in 602), though it cannot be excluded that the material common to Agapius and Dionysius comes from another source, such as Sergius of Rusafa, a nobleman of Edessa, whom Dionysius names as a source for this period and to whom Agapius, as bishop of nearby Manbij, might well have had access.<sup>65</sup> Yet it is certainly a more economical solution to assume that it is to the same source that Dionysius and Agapius are indebted for their common pre-630 material as for their post-630 material, and that this source was the Theophilus of Edessa that both of them specifically name as a source. If 590 was indeed Theophilus' starting point, then it may be that he was seeking to continue the *History* of Menander Protector (ended in 582) or John of Epiphania (572–91).<sup>66</sup> One cannot rule out an even earlier start date, but it would be extremely difficult to verify this, since Theophilus would inevitably use for the sixth century the same sources (John of Ephesus, Evagrius, John of Antioch, etc.) as his dependants, and so his narrative would in any case look very similar to theirs.

The last notice that Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius would seem to have in common concerns the manoeuvres of the caliph Marwan against Sulayman ibn Hisham and Dahhak the Kharijite in 746. Thereafter Theophanes begins to adduce new material, and we can conclude that this point marks the commencement of the activity of the continuator of the 'eastern source'. Agapius and the chronicler of 1234 correspond very closely in their narratives – to the extent that one could often pass for a translation

64 Agapius, 455, gives a calculation of the years from Adam before proceeding to relate *amr al-'arab* 'the affairs of the Arabs', but it seems somewhat corrupt. Conrad, 'The *Mawālī*', 388, is perhaps the most recent to state, without explanation, that Theophilus' chronicle began with Creation.

65 Msyr 11.III, 409/411: 'From this nobleman Sergius is derived (a part of) the chronicle of Dionysius of Telmahre (which extends) over six generations.' See Palmer, WSC, 98–99, 134 n. 306, 135 n. 308.

66 On whom see Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, 293–99, 308–10.

of the other – from 744 to 750, then a little less so until 754–55.<sup>67</sup> Both conclude with an account of the revolt of 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, uncle of the first Abbasid caliph Abu l-'Abbas, against the latter's brother, Mansur, who defeated 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali with the help of his general Abu Muslim and became the second Abbasid caliph. The narratives of Agapius and Dionysius are very close, though the latter abbreviates it somewhat, and so we can be reasonably sure that the notice derives from Theophilus. Theophanes, although he has a number of the key points of the story (in particular that Mansur was in Mecca when Abu l-'Abbas died, that Abu Muslim engaged 'Abdallah near Nisibis, and that Abu Muslim was persuaded by blandishments and ruses to appear before Mansur who then killed him), includes numerous additional details that indicate he is not using the same source(s) at this point as Dionysius and Agapius. Hereafter the content of Dionysius' chronicle changes appreciably. The actions of Muslim authorities are noted, but only very briefly or only insofar as they impinged upon the Christian population. And Theophanes' account no longer bears any resemblance to that of either Agapius or Dionysius. So it would seem that Theophilus stopped at this point, with the consolidation of the rule of the caliph Mansur in 754–55.

As regards Theophilus' personal aims for his composition, we are lucky to have the report of what someone else thought he was doing. As noted above, in the preface to his own work Dionysius gives some attention to his predecessors 'who have written about earlier times'.<sup>68</sup> He reviews chronography and ecclesiastical history, then goes on to suggest that there had recently emerged a third type, namely 'narratives (*tash'yātā*) resembling ecclesiastical history'. What united such accounts was not their content; of the examples Dionysius cites – Daniel son of Moses of Tur 'Abdin, John son of Samuel of the west country, Theophilus of Edessa and Theodosius, metropolitan of Edessa – we know that Daniel wrote on church matters,<sup>69</sup> Theophilus mostly on secular events. Rather they were all distinguished,

67 It is not impossible that Agapius is using Dionysius directly, or a transmitter/continuator of Dionysius, but he does state explicitly that he is citing the actual writings of Theophilus (see above).

68 Dionysius' preface is preserved in Msyr 11.XX, 378/357–58.

69 Elias of Nisibis, 168, cites him for the election of the patriarch Athanasius Sandalaya (AH 122), the appearance of an unusual star (170 = AH 127) and the occurrence of an earthquake that destroyed the Jacobite church at Mabbug (171 = AH 131); and Dionysius himself cites him regarding the generosity of the Edessan magnate Athanasius bar Gumaye, a report that includes a long anecdotal account of how Athanasius came to build a baptistery at Edessa (Msyr 11.XVI, 447–49/475–77).



according to Dionysius, by their failure to maintain either the chronological rigour of the chronicle or the pursuit of causes and interrelationships that characterised ecclesiastical history: 'Those whom we have mentioned here set forth their accounts in a compartmentalised and discontinuous fashion, without paying strict heed to chronological accuracy or the order of succession of events.'<sup>70</sup> So they were narrative histories, but lacking a chronological or thematic thread.

Though perhaps a little harsh, this is a relatively apt characterisation of Theophilus. It is true that he does present his information in a largely chronological order, but he makes little effort to establish firm, reliable dates for each entry. For the seventh century in particular he makes heavy use of anecdotal material: Mu'awiya's demolition of the Colossus of Rhodes, Constans' dream that he would lose a naval engagement with the Arabs in 654, the rebel Shabur and the imperial envoy Sergius at Mu'awiya's court, the election by lot of Marwan ibn al-Hakam in 684, and so on. Each of these accounts constitutes a self-sufficient narrative unit bearing little connection to any other, and this, as Dionysius says, has the effect of making Theophilus' writing seem somewhat disjointed. Only with the description of the overthrow of the Umayyads are we given a more continuous relation where causal links between events are brought out. But this was perhaps not really Theophilus' fault; as was pleaded by a contemporary of his, who was also attempting to write a chronicle: 'We have traversed many places and not found any accurate composition, only miscellany.'<sup>71</sup> If Theophilus failed to produce a comprehensive narrative of events from 630–742,<sup>72</sup> it was for lack of material not of industry or talent. Despite his disparaging tone, Dionysius did make heavy use of Theophilus in his own work, certainly for information, and it is also likely that it played a part in the adoption by him and others of a narrative format in place of the staccato annalistic bulletins that were so much a feature of earlier Syriac chronography.<sup>73</sup>

When one examines the content of Theophilus' chronicle, one is at once struck by its concentration on secular events – warfare and diplomacy between the emperors and caliphs in particular. There are occasional reports

70 Msyr 10.XX, 378/358: *msaykā'it wa-mfasqā'it 'badw tash'itūn kad lā nṭar l-ḥattūtūtā d-zabnē aw l-naqīpūtā d-sū'rānē*.

71 *Chron Zuqnin*, 146–47.

72 He does much better for the period 743–54, whether because he was, as he said, 'a witness to these events', or because he had more written sources, or both.

73 A parallel, or even precursor, to the marriage of *ta'rīkh* (annals) and *akhbār* (narrative history) that we see in Islamic historiography in the mid-eighth century; see below.

on such matters as the collapse of a church after an earthquake, but there is no ecclesiastical material proper. This, plus the lack of interest in dates noted above, leads one to speculate whether Theophilus' intention might have been to compose a classicising history. This would certainly be in keeping with the impression that we have of him, namely that he was something of a Hellenophile, writing his astrological works in Greek, translating Homer and Galen, and naming his son Deukalion. Moreover, of the period he covers Theophilus devotes by far the most attention to the events of the last decade, from the murder of Walid II in 744 to the triumph of the Abbasids in 754, and he states clearly 'I was myself a constant witness of these wars and I would write things down so that nothing of them escaped me', or so Agapius claims in the passage cited above. Thus we have also the element of autopsy which was so important a feature of classicising history.<sup>74</sup> Finally, as noted above, he may well have been picking up where a previous classicising historian, Menander Protector, left off, which was a common practice for this genre (as opposed to starting from Creation or Jesus Christ).

### THEOPHILUS' SOURCES

There has been almost no study at all of what might have been the sources used by Theophilus. It is not an easy question to answer, since we have no direct clues and, as noted above, the period from 630 to the 750s is an obscure one in Eastern Christian historiography. Looking at the subject matter of the chronicle, we can see that there are three principal types of material: Byzantine (notices about Byzantine emperors and dealings with the Muslims from a Byzantine perspective, especially battle narratives), Muslim (notices about caliphs, military campaigns and civil wars) and disasters (plagues, earthquakes, famines, floods etc.) or signs in the sky (comets, eclipses etc.). Though no firm conclusions can be drawn as yet, it seems worthwhile advancing some tentative observations about this material in the hope that it will stimulate further research in this direction.

#### 1. Byzantine material: the 'eastern source'?

There are frequent laments in modern scholarship about the lack of Byzantine writing on the Arab conquests, and yet Theophilus presents us with

74 What is lacking is any evidence of that other notable trait of classicising history, the digression. This is also absent, however, from Nicephorus' work and he was certainly striving to write a classicising history.



some quite lengthy and detailed notices on this subject: the battles with the Arabs (of the patrician Sergius; of Theodore, brother of Heraclius; and of the general Baanes), Heraclius' farewell to Syria, the Arab conquest of Egypt, the Arab subjection of Syria and Mesopotamia, the Arab capture of Cyprus and Arwad, the naval battle of Phoenix, the failed rebellion of Shabur (supported by the Arabs) against Constans, the defeat of an Arab fleet in the 670s and successful Mardaite raids against the Arabs.<sup>75</sup> One could assume that these battle narratives were a unit in themselves, an account of Arab-Byzantine clashes that ended on a positive note, a few Byzantine triumphs that held out hope for the future recovery of this Christian regime. Otherwise one might suppose that Theophilus received them already collated with all the rest of the Byzantine material, most obviously the notices on Byzantine emperors, and postulate that he had to hand a full Byzantine chronicle covering the period *ca.* 630–750s or *ca.* 590–750s.

I label these accounts Byzantine simply because they describe events involving Byzantine characters and would seem to take the Byzantine side rather than the Arab. Indeed, a number of the battle accounts were evidently selected because they constitute victories for the Byzantines (e.g. Phoenix, Shabur's aborted revolt, the failed Arab naval advance on Constantinople and devastating Mardaite raids against the Arabs). Even with defeats, the tenor is pro-Byzantine; think, for example, of the image of the heroic patrician Sergius, who, having fallen off his horse, brushes aside offers of help from his soldiers, selflessly advising them rather to run and save themselves from the pursuing Arabs; or the loyal chamberlain Andrew who courageously stands his ground against the caliph Mu'awiya and lectures him on the art of rule.<sup>76</sup> Now the perspective of such narratives is rather at odds with Theophilus' documentation of the third Arab civil war and the Abbasid revolution (743–54), where his interests would seem to lie almost wholly with the Muslim Arab government. It is entirely plausible, then, that Theophilus did have a Byzantine chronicle at his disposal, and that he simply supplemented it and brought it up to date with material drawn from

75 For these narratives see the translation below under the years 634–36 (Sergius/Theodore/Baanes), 636–40 (Heraclius' farewell; capture of Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia), 649–50 (Cyprus and Arwad), 654–55 (Phoenix), 666–67 (Shabur), *ca.* 672 (defeat of Arab fleet) and 677 (Mardaites).

76 See the relevant notices in the translation section below, under the years 634 and 666–67. Speck, *Geteilte Dossier*, 170, takes this as an indication that the 'eastern source' was in Greek, which is possible (see next paragraph), but not cogent, for Syriac-speaking Chalcedonians of Palestine and Syria could also be expected to have held such a position, especially in the early decades of Muslim rule.

the Muslim sphere. I would also venture to suggest that we should identify this Byzantine chronicle with the aforementioned 'eastern source' and so dissociate it from Theophilus, if only for the practical purpose of trying to identify the latter's Byzantine source(s).<sup>77</sup>

Since Theophilus was highly accomplished at translating from Greek into Syriac, as noted above, it is tempting to assume that this 'eastern source' was in Greek, and there are some hints from Theophilus' dependants that this might have been the case.<sup>78</sup> But since Syriac was replete with Greek vocabulary and a high proportion of educated Syriac-speakers were competent in Greek, it is extremely difficult to demonstrate that a Syriac text is definitely derived from Greek, especially if, as here, one no longer has the original Syriac text. Who might have been the author of this 'eastern source'? He was without doubt a Chalcedonian, which would explain his pro-Byzantine leanings, but probably from the Levant rather than from a Byzantine-ruled region, for many of his notices, such as those about the sabotage of the Arab fleet in Tripoli and the encounter between Andrew and Shabur at the court of Mu'awiya, even if pro-Byzantine, reveal a fair degree of familiarity with what was happening in Muslim-ruled lands. One possible candidate is the aforementioned George Syncellus. We know, from his own admission, that he was intending to write a world chronicle up to his own day, and it was only ill health that prevented him from completing it past the reign of Diocletian (285–305). Possibly the latter portion (305–813) was more complete than is usually supposed, even if still a little rough and not properly edited.<sup>79</sup> We would then have to look for another continuator of

77 One could go so far as to make the 'eastern source'/Byzantine chronicle the principal source and Theophilus no more than the author of an addition on the third Arab civil war/Abbasid revolution, but Dionysius makes clear that Theophilus wrote a full chronicle and that it must have treated Christians as well as Muslims, since it contained what Dionysius considered to be pejorative remarks about Miaphysites ('His presentation of all events involving one of our number is fraudulent': Palmer, *WSC*, 92). Though one could argue that both chronicles were available separately to Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius, it is easier to explain how these three authors record much the same events in much the same order if we think of one overall chronicle (nevertheless combining a number of different sources) that was available to all three of them, whether directly or indirectly, and that they supplemented with different materials.

78 E.g. Sergius' characterisation of the eunuch Andrew as 'neither man nor woman nor *'wd't'rw*s (= Greek *oudeteros*)', Heraclius' Greek farewell to Syria/*sōsou Syria*, and the pun in Emperor Constans' dream about Thessalonica/*thes allo nikēn* before the battle of Phoenix, though one could also argue that the Greek is there for literary effect. See also Speck, *Geteilte Dossier*, 52–53, 169–71, 185–87, 499–502 and 516–19, and n. 59 above, and notes 242, 261–63, 272, 276, 342, 392, 402–3, 682 and Appendix 1 n. 17 in the translation below.

79 This is effectively the view of Speck, *Geteilte Dossier*, esp. 516–19, though he sees



the 'eastern source', since it is unlikely that a copy of George's chronicle, halting at *ca.* 743, would have gone to Theophilus while another copy, which he extended to *ca.* 780, went to Theophanes.<sup>80</sup>

Another possible candidate for the authorship of the 'eastern source' is John son of Samuel, whom Dionysius describes as 'of the western country' (i.e. somewhere in the Levant, most likely the Mediterranean coastal region) and whom he places among those who wrote 'narratives resembling ecclesiastical history'.<sup>81</sup> This is the same category that Dionysius uses for Theophilus of Edessa, which both strengthens the argument (i.e. their styles are compatible) and weakens it (would not Dionysius have noticed if Theophilus was heavily reliant on John, though would he have said so if he did?)

A final matter that requires consideration is whether this 'eastern source' reached Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius only via Theophilus of Edessa or by means of an intermediary. The former scenario seems most likely for Agapius and Dionysius, but it is possible that the 'eastern source' reached Theophanes independently, via someone who extended it until 780 (and translated it into Greek, if it was originally written in Syriac rather than in Greek). This and all questions to do with the authorship and nature of the 'eastern source' will, however, remain highly speculative until more work has been done on them, but it is interesting to observe that there was considerably more Byzantine history writing at this time than is usually allowed for.

## 2. Muslim material

Comparison between Theophilus and the Syriac *Chronicle of 819*, written by a monk of Qartmin monastery in northern Mesopotamia, reveals a number of close textual correspondences in quite a few of the notices on Muslim affairs and natural phenomena (listed in Appendix 2 below). It is not totally impossible that the *Chronicle of 819* was using Theophilus, but the two works have many notices that they do not share and they have a very

George's work as a loose dossier rather than a complete text. Cf. Huxley, 'Erudition', esp. 216–17. Palmer, *WSC*, 95, notes that Dionysius includes a certain George of Ragtaya in his review of past chroniclers and suggests this could be George Syncellus.

80 Though Speck does argue for this, postulating a second dossier.

81 I would myself prefer to identify Dionysius' John bar Samuel with John of Antioch, since Dionysius does seem to be presenting the key exponents of the various genres, and John of Antioch fulfilled such a position for the Christian world chronicle. Dionysius mentions a John of Antioch, but this almost certainly intends John Malalas. On these two figures see Treadgold, *Early Byzantine Historians*, 311–29, 235–56.

different character,<sup>82</sup> and so it is much more likely that they are independent of each other, but have a common source, and this is evidently a Syriac chronicle that went up to the 730s, the point at which they cease to have any shared notices. It has been argued that this common source is John of Litarb (d. 737),<sup>83</sup> a stylite monk living in early eighth-century northern Syria. We still have the remnants of a lively correspondence that took place between John, Jacob, bishop of Edessa (d. 708), and George, bishop of the Arabs (d. 724), and he seems to have been a major Christian intellectual of early Islamic Syria.<sup>84</sup> His spiritual master, Jacob of Edessa, wrote a Eusebian-style chronicle up to 692, and it is reported that John continued it up to the time of his own death.<sup>85</sup> The only potential problem with this is that Dionysius remarks that 'part of his (John of Litarb's) book is conveyed (*hmil*) in this book (of mine)',<sup>86</sup> and so he would effectively be using John twice (directly and via Theophilus of Edessa), though this is not impossible.<sup>87</sup>

One important aspect of this common source of Theophilus and the *Chronicle of 819* is that it draws our attention to how and in what form information about Muslim affairs circulated among Christians of the Near East. The items these two texts share (listed in Appendix 2 below) are particularly concerned with caliphs, and indeed it is the reigns and deeds of caliphs and their opponents that make up the bulk of the Muslim Arab material found in the various Christian chronological texts for the period *ca.* 630–750s. Should we think of one single 'history of the caliphs' (a sort of *Liber calipharum*) on which all Christian chronicles relied or of a multi-

82 The *Chronicle of 819* principally presents the history of the monastery of Qartmin, drawn from the latter's archives, and then mostly brief notices on local church affairs, natural disasters / phenomena, and the Muslim caliphs. See further Palmer, *WSC*, 75–84, and Palmer, 'Chroniques brèves'. Brooks, 'Sources of Theophanes', was the first to draw attention to this common source.

83 Palmer, 'Chroniques brèves', 70 and 79.

84 We have sixteen letters of Jacob to John (see my *Seeing Islam*, 741) and four letters of George to John (Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.988; on George see Tannous, *Between Christology and Kalam*).

85 Msyr 10.XX, 378/358: 'Others charted the succession of the years, namely Jacob of Edessa and John of Litarb'.

86 Msyr 11.XX, 461/500, unless Michael himself is speaking here.

87 If we want to assume that Dionysius' list of chroniclers in his introduction is a pretty comprehensive guide, then John son of Samuel is still an unknown and we could select him as our candidate for this common source (and not identify him with John of Antioch, as I suggested above), but of course the very fact that he is an unknown means that this does not advance our knowledge very much.



plicity of them?<sup>88</sup> On the one hand the material in Christian chronicles does follow a fairly standard pattern and they share the same basic contents. Yet on the other hand each chronicle possesses details that are not in the others. For example, the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741* and the *Chronicle of 819* have very different notices on Walid I:

Walid succeeded to power, (taking up) the sceptre of rule of the Saracens in accordance with what his father had arranged. He reigned for 9 years. (He was) a man of great prudence in arranging his armies to the extent that, though destitute of divine favour, he crushed the strength of almost all the neighbouring peoples adjoining him. He debilitated Byzantium in particular with constant raiding, brought the islands to the point of destruction and tamed the land of India by raids. In the western regions, through a general of his army by the name of Musa, he attacked and conquered the kingdom of the Goths established in Spain with ancient solidity, and having cast out their rule he imposed tribute. So, waging all things successfully, he (Walid) gave an end to his life in the ninth year of his rule, having already seen the riches of all the peoples displayed to him. (*Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §36)

A devious man, who increased the exactions and hardships more than all his predecessors; he completely wiped out robbers and bandits; and he built a city and called it 'Ayn Gara. (*Chron 819*, 14)

A recent article by Sean Anthony examined the account of the assassination of 'Umar I in Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius and compared it with a number of Muslim depictions of this event, concluding that the latter served as the basis for the former.<sup>89</sup> Because Anthony just takes the one incident and does not deal with these texts as a whole, he assumed that it was Dionysius who inserted the Muslim material, since Theophanes and Agapius had much shorter notices. However, the latter two authors very commonly abbreviate Theophilus and there are enough similarities between their and Dionysius' account (see the translation below, under the year 644) to make it clear that all three are using, whether directly or indirectly, a common source. But was this common source Theophilus or an author that he was drawing upon; to put it another way, was Theophilus responsible for incorporating the Muslim material in his work or was he reliant upon a

<sup>88</sup> Note that Elias of Nisibis cites two anonymous sources on Muslim history: a 'chronicle of the kings of the Arabs' and a 'chronicle of the Arabs' (Borut, 'La circulation de l'information historique', 145): unless both titles refer to the same source.

<sup>89</sup> 'The Syriac account of Dionysius of Tel-Mahre on the assassination of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab.'

chronicle that had already done this work for him?<sup>90</sup> Since he worked as an astrologer at the Abbasid court, it is very likely that he spoke and read Arabic and he would have been in a good position to procure Arabic books. It is certainly plausible, then, that we should regard him as the one who made all of this material on the Muslim regime available to later chroniclers.

At this point, however, one should note that there are two quite distinct types of Muslim material in Theophilus: the fairly short and simple notices on individual caliphs up to and including Hisham (724–43), which are pithy and unconnected, and the very full and detailed account of events from 743–54, which is presented as a continuous narrative and includes causal explanations. The former could travel orally and so, though they might derive ultimately from a Muslim source, could be picked up by a Christian writer who was not intimately familiar with Muslim affairs or writings. The latter presume deep acquaintance with Muslim politics and very likely with Muslim historical texts.<sup>91</sup> When Theophilus says, in the words of Agapius cited above, that 'I was myself a constant witness of these wars', one assumes that it is to the events of 743–54 that he is referring, and it is this section that I would almost certainly attribute to Theophilus' own hand. How much of the earlier Muslim material, on the succession of the caliphs, he put together and how much he simply took over from an earlier author is a question that cannot at present be answered.

### THE CIRCULATION OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND EARLY ISLAM

One reasonably sure conclusion that could be inferred from the above discussion is, first, that a lot more historical material was circulating between the Muslim and Christian communities than is usually assumed<sup>92</sup> and, secondly, that there was already a fairly advanced tradition of Muslim history-writing by the mid-eighth century. We get a hint of the former point from one of our

<sup>90</sup> Could, for example, the 'eastern source' have included Muslim as well as Byzantine material? In this case Theophilus would have done no more than add material on the third Arab civil war and the Abbasid revolution to a very full chronicle that covered Muslim and Byzantine politics up to ca. 743.

<sup>91</sup> See the example I give in n. 876 in the translation section below, on the massacre of the Umayyads, where there is almost word-for-word equivalence with the account of the Muslim historian Ya'qubi.

<sup>92</sup> For some interesting thoughts along these lines see Conrad, 'The *Mawālī*'. See also Figure 1 below.



earliest Christian caliphal histories (composed *ca.* 724–25), which is little more than a list of caliphs and their time in office, but which would appear, from its use of the lunar calendar<sup>93</sup> (Yazid II died in AH 104–05) and of Arabic technical terms (*rasūl* 'messenger' and *fitna* 'civil war'), to derive from an Arabic original:

A notice of the life of Mḥmt̄ the messenger (*r...ā*)<sup>94</sup> of God, after he had entered his city and three months before he entered it, from his first year; and how long each king lived who arose after him over the Muslims once they had taken power; and how long there was dissension (*ptnā*)<sup>95</sup> among them.

Three months before Mḥmd came.<sup>96</sup>

And Mḥmd lived ten years (more).

And Abu Bakr son of Abu Quhafa: 2 years and 6 months.

And 'Umar son of Kattab: 10 years and 3 months.

And 'Uthman son of 'Affan: 12 years.

And dissension after 'Uthman: 5 years and 4 months.

And Ma'wiyā son of Abu Syfan: 19 years and 2 months.

And Yazid son of Ma'wiyā: 3 years and 8 months.

And dissension after Yazid: 9 months.

And Marwan son of Ḥakam: 9 months.

And 'Abd al-Malik son of Marwan: 21 years and 1 month.

Walid bar 'Abd al-Malik: 9 years and 8 months.

And Sulayman son of 'Abd al-Malik: 2 years and 9 months.

And 'Umar son of 'Abd al-'Aziz: 2 years and 5 months.

And Yazid son of 'Abd al-Malik: 4 years and 1 month and 2 days.

The total of all these years is 104, and 5 months and 2 days. (*Chron* 724, 155)

What can we say about the second conclusion, namely that there was already a fairly advanced tradition of Muslim history-writing by the mid-eighth century? At this time we can observe two different styles: compilations of anecdotes on a particular topic, such as 'The Campaigns of the Prophet', 'The Battle of Siffin', 'The Murder of Hujr ibn 'Adi' and

93 The total given at the end of the list, 104 years and 5 months and 2 days, only works if one counts in lunar years: Yazid II died in AH 104–5/724, but 104 solar years would take one into AD 727.

94 A later hand has tried to erase this word, which is clearly meant to be Arabic *rasūl* 'messenger'.

95 This represents the Arabic word *fitna*, which denotes civil discord.

96 The 'three months before Mḥmt̄ came' presumably refers to the interval between the beginning of the Islamic calendar on 16 July 622 and the date of Muhammad's arrival in Medina on 24 September 622. See Tabari, 1.1255–56, where it is explained that though Muhammad's emigration to Medina is the starting point of Muslim chronology, the fact that he made it in the third month of the year means that 'year 1' begins 2½ months earlier.

'The Life of Mu'awiya',<sup>97</sup> and year-by-year lists of holders of high office and notable events.<sup>98</sup> Gradually these two genres began to influence each other. There was an increasing emphasis on giving some chronological order to narratives of early Islam;<sup>99</sup> conversely and coincidentally, there was a move to flesh out lists compiled from government records that had been kept since probably the reign of Mu'awiya (661–80),<sup>100</sup> and that could include caliphs, governors, judges, leaders of the pilgrimage, commanders of the summer and winter campaigns into Byzantine territory, and so on.<sup>101</sup> Names of those who had fallen in battle may also have been inscribed since they had a bearing upon the distribution of stipends.<sup>102</sup> Then, in the early ninth century, we begin to get our first chronicles (*ta'rīkh* 'alā l-sinīn): those of al-Haytham ibn 'Adi (d. 822) and Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi (d. 857), and, our first extant example, that of Khalifa ibn Khayyat (d. 854).<sup>103</sup> In these, and especially in the 'History of the Prophets and Kings' of Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 923), we see a full marriage between historical narratives and official annals.<sup>104</sup>

It is not impossible that Muslim historians hit upon using an annalistic style of presentation independently,<sup>105</sup> but since the technique has a

97 These and other examples are given in Faruqi, *Early Muslim Historiography*, 214–302. Compare the extant work on the 'Battle of Siffin' by Nasr ibn Muzahim al-Minqari (d. 828). Moreover, Mourad, 'Al-Azdi', has recently shown that the 'Conquest of Syria' by Abu Mikhnaḥ al-Azdi (d. 774) substantially survives in the work of its later redactors, such as Abu Isma'il al-Azdi (d. *ca.* 820). See also Elad, 'Beginnings of Historical Writing'; Borrut, *Entre Mémoire et Pouvoir*.

98 The earliest that we can discern is by Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d. 742), who served the Umayyad regime in various departments of their administration. On him see Duri, *Historical Writing*, 95–121, and see 115–16 for his list of the reigns of the caliphs.

99 Jones, 'The Chronology of the *Maghāzī*' (that is, of the campaigns of the prophet Muhammad).

100 Papyri, inscriptions and coins suggest that an effective Umayyad administration was in place at a very early date; see Donner, 'The Formation of the Islamic State'.

101 Rotter, 'Abu Zur'a al-Dimashqi'; Schacht, *Origins*, 100 (on the early provenance of Kindi's lists).

102 See Tabari, 1.2496 (on 'irafat). Sellheim ('Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte', 73–77) and Schacht ('Mūsā ibn 'Uqba', 288–300) have discerned name-lists as a discrete element in Muhammad's biography.

103 Duri, *Historical Writing*, 53–54 (Haytham); Sezgin, *GAS*, 316 (Abu Hassan); Schacht in *Arabica* 16 (1969), 79f. (Ibn Khayyat).

104 That is, between *akhbār* and *ta'rīkh*; see further Crone, *Slaves*, introduction. On early Islamic historiography in general see Donner, *Narratives*; Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*; Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, 354–94.

105 It could, for example, originate in pre-Islamic practice; cf. Tabari, 1.1254: 'When they



considerable pedigree in the Middle East, it is worth examining the possibility of borrowing from the other cultures existing in the region. There is no firm evidence of Iranian authors producing annalistic writings;<sup>106</sup> neither did Nestorians until Elias of Nisibis (d. 1050).<sup>107</sup> Annalistic techniques were, of course, deployed by writers in the Greco-Roman tradition as far back as Thucydides, who was himself probably confirming the practice of individual cities before him. Any direct influence upon the Arabic tradition seems unlikely, however, given the conspicuous absence of Arabic translations of Byzantine historical works.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the Eusebian tradition of chronography in Greek appears to have faltered after the efforts of Panodorus and Anianus in the fifth century,<sup>109</sup> and Greek historical writing as a whole sank into the doldrums with the onset of Arab rule, as noted above. On its re-emergence in the late eighth and early ninth century, it does evince an interest in precise chronological narrative, as is exemplified by the chronicle of Theophanes, but an indebtedness to some Syriac or Arabic model is readily apparent.<sup>110</sup>

West Syrian history-writing, on the other hand, suffered far less disruption.<sup>111</sup> The royal annals of Edessa inspired a subsequent episcopal tradition of annalistic record-keeping, of which we find extracts in chronological works of the mid-sixth and mid-seventh century.<sup>112</sup> At monasteries such as Qenneshre and Qartmin in northern Mesopotamia, the tradition was continued

dated an event, they did so from the like of a drought which occurred in some part of their country, a barren year which befell them, the term of a governor who ruled over them, or an event the news of which became widespread among them.' The cataclysmic nature of the *hijra* could have served to halt the constant revision of *termini a quo* by furnishing the ultimate *point de repère*.

106 Spuler, 'The Evolution of Persian Historiography', 126–32; Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 59ff. But see Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 564–65 ('Sasanian royal annals').

107 Nestorians seem to have favoured a biographical arrangement of material; cf. the anonymous *Chronicle of Khuzistan* and the *Chronicle of Siirt* (see bibliography).

108 Steinschneider, *Die arabischen Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen*, fails to signal any.

109 The *Chronicon Paschale*, which goes up to 630, is obsessed with chronological computations, even coming up with its own system, but does not seem to have enjoyed wide circulation or influence.

110 Mango, 'The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography', 363–69.

111 Both the *Chronicle of 819* and the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* have a gap for the years AG 976–88/664–77 (Palmer, *WSC*, 59 and 77), but a number of notices on natural phenomena shared by Theophanes, 353–55, and Msyr 11.XIII, 436/456–57, show that there was still some activity.

112 Debié, 'Record Keeping and Chronicle Writing in Antioch and Edessa'.

until the time of Dionysius of Telmahre, who gave it new vigour.<sup>113</sup> After the fashion of Eusebius, 'other men charted the succession of years, namely Jacob of Edessa and John the stylite of Litarb', as noted above. Language constituted no barrier to exchange between Syrian and Arab cultures. Many Arabs, Muslim as well as Christian, knew Syriac, and West Syrian Christians made use of Arabic very early on as a language of scholarship.<sup>114</sup> So if one were to posit extraneous rather than indigenous origins for the annalistic form in Muslim historiography, then it is to the West Syrian historical tradition that one should look.

It is worth emphasising, in conclusion, that the lines between Christian and Muslim were not drawn so rigidly as often tends to be assumed, either in terms of definitions or in terms of social relations. It is true that Christians living in the Byzantine realm were to a large degree insulated from contact with Muslims, but for those living under the latter's rule it was a different story. The claim of the Mesopotamian monk John bar Penkaye that 'there was no distinction between pagan and Christian, the believer was not known from a Jew' may be exaggerated,<sup>115</sup> but it is nevertheless instructive. The initial indifference of the Muslims to divisions among the peoples whom they conquered, when compounded with the flight and enslavement of an appreciable proportion of the population and with the elimination of internal borders across a huge area extending from north-west Africa to India, meant that there was considerable human interaction across social, ethnic and religious lines. This was especially true for those who sought employment in the bustling cosmopolitan garrison cities of the new rulers, where one was exposed to contact with men of very diverse origin, creed and status. In addition, there were the widespread phenomena of conversion and apostasy, of inter-confessional marriage and festival attendance, of commercial contacts and public debate, all of which served to break down sectarian barriers.

An excellent illustration of this point is the author of the chronicle that I translate in this volume, Theophilus of Edessa. He began his life in Edessa, the key city of Syriac Christianity, yet ended up in Baghdad, the heart of

113 For example, the work of earlier authors is clear in the *Chronicle of 819* (Palmer, 'Chroniques brèves', and Brooks, 'Sources of Theophanes and Syriac Chroniclers').

114 Griffith, 'Stephen of Ramla and the Christian Kerygma in Arabic in Ninth Century Palestine'. For a later example of such sharing of historical ideas see Borrut, 'La circulation de l'information historique'.

115 John bar Penkaye, 151/179. I expand upon this point in the first two chapters of my *Seeing Islam*.



the early Abbasid Empire. He advised Muslim caliphs on astrological affairs and his scientific writings were appreciated by later Muslim astrologers, but excerpts from them also entered into a Byzantine astrological corpus. He translated works of Galen and Homer into Syriac, but seemed also to be comfortable with writing a history of Muslim caliphs and rebels in the Near East. Theophilus cannot, therefore, be viewed as simply a Christian who writes under Muslim rule; he is evidently a highly educated man, still influenced by the traditions of Antiquity as well as cognisant with the culture of his employers.

None of this is to say that religious affiliation did not count for a great deal; it obviously did. But it did not exert, in some predictable fashion, an all-encompassing power to direct patterns of social relations in such a way as to prevent external influence or positive response to that influence. Religious specialists of the various confessions in the Near East might well have wished that this were the case, but the region was and remained too diverse in terms of culture, ethnicity, history, language and so on for that ever to happen.

#### NOTES ON TRANSLATION

In what follows I translate the notices common to Theophilus' three dependants – Theophanes,<sup>116</sup> Agapius and Dionysius (as represented by Michael the Syrian and/or the *Chronicle of 1234*). Since Theophilus' chronicle is not itself extant, this is the only way to convey the content of this work. There are three key reasons for carrying out this exercise. First, it gives greater prominence to a pivotal text in the historiography of the early Islamic period, one that sheds light on both the Christian and Muslim communities of this comparatively poorly documented age. Secondly, it makes accessible material for the period 590–750s that was not previously translated into English (listed below). Thirdly, it draws attention to the fact that the question of how later chroniclers used Theophilus and how chronological information reached Theophilus is a lot more complicated than has generally been supposed. Often it has just been assumed that all information about 'eastern' affairs (i.e. occurring in Muslim-ruled lands) in Theophanes, Agapius and

<sup>116</sup> As I note above, Theophanes might only be indirectly dependent upon Theophilus, but that would require further investigation to determine and for the purposes of this volume I class him with Agapius and Dionysius as a dependant of Theophilus, without specifying whether directly or indirectly so.

Dionysius must derive from Theophilus and that such information as does come from Theophilus is copied by his three dependants without much revision. Presenting next to one another the notices of Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius for each event vividly illustrates the very different ways these three chroniclers have used Theophilus. I have also cross-referenced the notices to other texts so as to aid investigation into the ways in which historical material was circulating in the seventh- and eighth-century Near East.

#### The texts

The following are translated in this work; for information about all other primary sources cited please see the bibliography.

Agapius of Manbij, *Kitab al-'Unwan*: this Arabic text is edited with French translation by A.A. Vasiliev, 'Kitab al-'Unvan, histoire universelle écrite par Agapius (Mahboub) de Menbidj', Part 2.2, *Patrologia Orientalis* 8 (1912), 399–547 (covering the years 380–761).<sup>117</sup> I translate from Vasiliev's Arabic text. In his day the unique manuscript was defective in a number of places, but it would appear to have been restored since then (see Appendix 3 below). Much more is now readable and I incorporate these new insights into my translation. Except for a Muslim historical work, Agapius seems to make little recourse to any other source besides Theophilus for the period 590–750s, and so what is translated below represents almost the whole of his text for this period.

Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*: this Syriac text is edited with French translation by J.B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche Miaphysite d'Antioche, 1166–99* (Paris, 1901–10). I translate from Chabot's Syriac text (in vol. 4, Paris, 1910), checking it where necessary against the facsimile of the Aleppo manuscript of Michael (published by Gorgias Press, 2009, as the first volume of a series on Michael's chronicle, of which the general editor is George Kiraz). Michael arranges his notices in three columns, one devoted to church matters and the other two catering for political affairs, natural disasters and the like. For ecclesiastical matters Michael seems to have had access to a variety of sources and archives, but for civil matters he relies very heavily on Theophilus (via Dionysius of Telmahre's history), and so what is translated below represents most of Michael's text

<sup>117</sup> An English translation is given in <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/morefathers.html>, but it is made from Vasiliev's French translation by Google machine translator, and is intended just as a rough guide for those who do not read French.



on this subject, except for some of the natural phenomena (earthquakes, eclipses, comets), in which Michael seems to have taken a special interest and concerning which he assiduously sought out additional material.

*Chronicle of 1234*: this Syriac text was edited with a Latin translation by J.B. Chabot, *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (CSCO 81/109 *scr. syri* 36/56; Paris, 1916/1937). It is available in an English translation for the years 582–717 (Palmer, WSC, 111–221), and in French for the period after 775 (A. Abouna, CSCO 354 *scr. syri* 154; Louvain, 1974). But the period 717–75 is still only available in Latin, and so my translation here represents the first translation into a modern language. The translation of Palmer is quite free (as befits the fact that he was trying to make a large body of text accessible and readable) and so I have done my own translations, making it as close to the text as is stylistically possible, except for a few very long passages, where readability is more important, and so I have then used Palmer's translation (as noted in the footnotes).<sup>118</sup> The chronicle of 1234 seems to make very little recourse to any other source besides Theophilus (via Dionysius of Telmahre's history) for civil matters of the period 590–750s, except for the Arab conquests and the first Arab civil war, for which he draws on Muslim sources, and so what is translated below represents almost all of his non-ecclesiastical notices for this period.

Theophanes' *Chronographia*: this Greek text is fully available in English in the translation of Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (*The Chronicle of Theophanes*, Oxford, 1997) and I am very grateful to them for allowing me to quote from it here. For Byzantine affairs Theophanes does have access to other sources, and so what is presented below is principally the information that Theophanes gives us on eastern affairs.

### Working principles

I have assembled here all and only those notices that feature in, and share similar ingredients with, two or all of Theophilus' three dependants. Notices that might seem by their content to derive from an eastern source but that are only found in one of Theophilus' three dependants I give separately within curly brackets. Notices in Michael the Syrian and the *Chronicle of 1234*, but not in Theophanes or Agapius, are excluded since they very likely only go back to Dionysius. Theophanes and Agapius give notices from Theophilus mostly in the same order, and I follow this order here.

<sup>118</sup> Even then I sometimes make very small changes, usually either for clarification, to make the translation closer to the Syriac text or to supply words that have been omitted.

Theophanes' chronicle has one or more Byzantine sources in common with the *Short History* of Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople (806–15). Since I am only interested here in Theophilus' chronicle and since both Theophanes' and Nicephorus' works are available in English, I will not cite in full a notice of Theophanes when he is clearly dependent upon a Byzantine source and not on Theophilus, but I will only cite enough to give a sense of the narrative and give the reference to the corresponding passage in Nicephorus.

For Dionysius I cite the text of both the *Chronicle of 1234* and of Michael the Syrian and I place the words<sup>119</sup> that are common to both texts in boldface so as to make clear the degree to which and the ways in which Msyr and *Chron 1234* adapt Dionysius. However, where the notices of Dionysius' dependants are both very long and close, I will, for the sake of avoiding excessive repetition, give the text of the fullest notice.

Where other historical sources record the same event, this will be indicated in the footnotes. Where another historical work actually betrays some textual correspondence with the notice of one or more of Theophilus' dependants, then that notice is translated after those of Theophilus' dependants. As regards Muslim Arabic sources, however, I have not attempted to cross-reference to all or many of them, since they are too numerous and mostly interdependent. Instead, I have cited the relevant entry in the *Annali* and *Chronographia* of Leone Caetani, who refers to all the relevant Arabic sources that were then available to him. I also frequently cite Tabari, since this is available for non-Arabists to consult in English translation, and Ibn Khayyat (d. ca. 854), because he wrote the earliest extant Muslim Arabic chronicle and this was not available to Caetani. I have only made recourse to other Arabic sources when they have specific information not found elsewhere. This method of dealing with the Arabic sources will probably arouse the ire of some Arabists/Islamicists, but I beg their indulgence and ask them to remember that this volume is meant to be accessible to scholars and students in other disciplines, who may well be put off by the heavy annotative practices common in Islamic history publications.

### Place names

I have explained in the footnotes the location of the lesser-known toponyms mentioned in this chronicle, but for the majority I refer the reader to the

<sup>119</sup> When they are from the same root, even if in different forms (i.e. noun, adjective, verb, participle, etc.).



maps, and I have indicated in the Gazetteer at the end of this volume in which map the place is to be found. Since each of Theophilus' three principal dependants represents a different language and cultural perspective, they very often use different names for the same place. However, so as not to confuse the reader I will try to use just one name for each place, and since Theophilus was writing in Syriac I have usually given the Syriac form, unless the Greek or modern form is much more commonly used in modern scholarly writing (thus Edessa instead of Urhay; Damascus instead of Daramsuq; Aleppo instead of Halab or Beroia). On the first occurrence I will, however, give the Greek or Arabic form where it is very different from the Syriac form.

### Arab names

Arab names of persons have a set format. First there is the personal name, given to them by their parents. Second is the name of the parent, usually the father; this will be preceded by *ibn*/'son of' or *bint*/'daughter of'. Finally, there is what is called in Arabic the *nisba*, the attribute; this could be the name of the place in which the person was born or resided (e.g. al-Basri/'the Basran' or 'of Basra'), the profession that they practice (e.g. al-Haddad/'the blacksmith'), or the clan/tribe that they belong to (e.g. al-Azdi/'of the tribe of Azd'). The latter is the most common in the period covered by this book, since in the early decades of their rule most Muslim Arabs identified themselves primarily in terms of their tribal affiliation. Since Syriac is, like Arabic, a Semitic language, Arab names are generally written in Syriac in a way that closely represents the original name. However, Theophanes, writing in Greek, had more problems, and his transliteration often differs substantially from the original, and I will therefore, on the first occurrence of the name, give in brackets the form used by Theophanes.

### Dating issues

Agapius, Michael the Syrian and the chronicler of 1234 proceed in a similar manner as regards assigning dates to their entries. They usually give a date to one event and then prefix the next few events with an expression such as 'in the same year', 'in the next year', 'at this time', etc.<sup>120</sup> So as not to burden the

<sup>120</sup> Though they differ in the way they give dates: for example, Agapius prefers to use the year of the ruler, whether emperor or caliph (I indicate this in the footnotes, giving the name of the ruler in full on first occurrence and in abbreviated form thereafter). This problem does not

translation with constant repetition I will not translate these expressions and I will only cite the actual date when it is embedded within a notice (rather than prefixed to it) or is of some importance. Where an absolute date is given I will, however, put it in the footnote, though it should be noted that these dates are not necessarily correct, and very often they are manifestly wrong. The problem would seem to be that Theophilus himself did not systematically provide dates. This caused particular problems for Theophanes, who is using an annalistic format, and so would have had simply to place events under the year that he thought most plausible. This is complicated by the fact that Theophanes chose to employ the 'year of the world' dating system, counting from the creation of the world (the so-called *annus mundi*; see below). Since this system was used by few, if any, of his sources, he had to try and make their systems fit his where his sources gave a date and to work out under which year of the world to place an entry where his sources did not give a date. Given this confusion, I do not cite Theophanes' dates, which are almost always out to some degree, and instead refer the reader to Mango and Scott's translation of Theophanes, where the necessary calculations and corrections are made.<sup>121</sup>

Since Theophilus' dependants often give different dates for the same event, I have decided to alleviate some of the confusion by assigning dates (according to the Christian/Common Era) to events where these are reasonably securely known from reliable sources external to Theophilus, and I place these in square brackets just before the title of the relevant notice. This also serves to demonstrate the fact that Theophilus was attempting to proffer a chronological ordering of events, for even though his dependants do not always agree on the dates of events, they do almost always place them in the same order. An event not assigned a date is generally to be located in time somewhere between the dates immediately preceding and following it, but should *not* be assumed to fall in the same year as the dated entry preceding it. Although I have tried to be as careful as possible in the provision of dates, it is not my intention in this work to solve problems of chronology and so the dates I give to events should not be taken as necessarily correct.

The following dating eras are used by the authors in this translation:

The Seleucid Era (AG = Anno Graecorum): this is also known as the era of Alexander the Great, who marks the start of Seleucid rule and Hellenistic

arise for Theophanes since he uses an annalistic format and assigns every event to a particular year, though he may, of course, sometimes place an event under the wrong year.

<sup>121</sup> For a helpful presentation of the issue see Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, lxiii–lxvii.



culture in the Middle East. The era is based on the Julian calendar, commencing on 1 October 312 BC. This is the era most commonly used by Syriac chroniclers.

The Islamic Era (AH = Anno Hegirae): this era begins with the emigration, or *hijra*, of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, and so is often called the Hijri Era. It is based on a cycle of twelve lunar months, beginning on 16 July 622.

The Era of Creation (AM = Annus Mundi): this era was more the preserve of scholars and a subject of learned debate rather than an era in everyday use. Since Jesus Christ was thought to have come to the world mid-way through the sixth millennium, the starting point of the era was often assumed to be 5500 BC, though the two principal methods of computing it began on 25 March 5492 BC (the Alexandrian) and 1 September 5509 (the Byzantine). Theophanes used the former, simply because George Syncellus had favoured it, which in turn was because it was popular among the Chalcedonians of Palestine, with whom he associated.

Byzantine Indictions: a cycle of fifteen years during which the tax known as the indiction (originally an extraordinary tax designed to raise money for specific purposes) was meant to remain unchanged. Because the fiscal and calendar years coincided (1 September–31 August), the indiction came to acquire a chronological meaning and to be used for dating purposes. For example, a document dated to the seventh indiction means that it was written in year seven of that particular indiction cycle. For the period of this book indiction cycles began in AD 582, 597, 612, 627, 642, 657, 672, 687, 702, 717, 732 and 747.

The Christian Era (AD = Anno Domini): this era begins with the birth of Jesus Christ, taken to be in AG 312. It is based on the Julian solar calendar, counting from 1 January. It was not used in the Middle East during the period with which this book is concerned, but given its current popularity it is the default era used in this book and so will not be prefixed with AD. It is sometimes referred to as the Common Era (CE).

### Transliteration

Since the majority of the readers of this book will not know Arabic and Syriac, I have kept to a simplified transliteration of proper names of persons and places in these two languages, leaving out diacritical marks and definite

articles, which clutter a text and impede its smooth reading. I operate on the principle that if you know the languages you do not need them, and if you do not know the languages they will not help you. However, for ordinary words and phrases in the original language the diacritical marks are often necessary for understanding and so in this case I provide them.

### Miscellaneous conventions

'I' : I use this sign to indicate that there is a move from one year's entry to another or from one lemma to another. This happens because our chroniclers, especially Theophanes, will often break up what was once a single notice on an event that lasted for some time and spread it across two or more year's entries/lemmata.

() : I use round brackets for minor explanatory comments of my own, such as a person's death date, the original spelling of a proper name, words needed to complete the sense, and so on.

[] : Square brackets are reserved for observations about the source text, especially to indicate that words are fragmentary or missing.

{ } : Curly brackets are employed, as noted above, for entries that deal with eastern affairs, but are only mentioned by one of Theophilus' dependants, and so we cannot tell whether it is definitely from him or not.

So as to make it easier to follow the narrative of the book, especially given that I am reproducing four accounts of each event, I give subheadings, in bold, explaining the nature of the event. These are entirely my own wording and are not derived from any of Theophilus' dependants. The chronicler of 1234 does actually give headings for the major events, but Theophanes, Agapius and Michael the Syrian do not, and so they are unlikely to belong to Theophilus' chronicle. As noted above, I have given dates to these subheadings where they are deemed reasonably reliable so as to help the reader follow the sequence of events.



## TRANSLATION OF THEOPHILUS OF EDESSA'S CHRONICLE

1890 King Thumana's reign

Theophilus (Kamel) Maron, a Syrian monk, lived in the city of Edessa. He was a contemporary of King Thumana, who reigned from 1890 to 1900. Theophilus was a prominent figure in the church and was known for his piety and wisdom. He was also a skilled writer and was responsible for the translation of the Chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa.

Theophilus was born in the city of Edessa, which was then part of the Roman Empire. He was a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church and was known for his devotion to his faith. He was also a skilled writer and was responsible for the translation of the Chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa. The chronicle is a historical work that covers the events of the city of Edessa from the time of its founding to the reign of King Thumana. It is a valuable source of information about the history of the city and the region.

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## SECTION 1

### THE PERSIAN KING KHUSRAU'S WAR AGAINST THE ROMANS<sup>1</sup>

#### (590) King Hormizd is killed and Khusrau flees to the Romans<sup>2</sup>

Theophanes: (King) Hormizd<sup>3</sup> was blinded and imprisoned. For a while Khusrau<sup>4</sup> treated his father (Hormizd) kindly in prison, providing him with every pleasure. However, Hormizd responded to this with abuse and by trampling on the king's offerings. In anger Khusrau ordered that Hormizd be beaten on his flanks with rough clubs until he died.<sup>5</sup> This grieved the Persians and led them to hate Khusrau. The latter assembled his forces, left the palace to tackle Bahram,<sup>6</sup> and proceeded to the plain of the river

1 In this section there are not many close textual correspondences between all three of our chroniclers, but beginning here allows investigation of the starting point of Theophilus' chronicle (TC), as explained in the introduction above. In particular, Theophanes has access to Byzantine sources (see Afinogenov, 'Justinian and Leo') and there are very few occasions where his narrative shows textual overlap with Agapius or Dionysius. I therefore only cite Theophanes' text partially, where it is closest to the outline of events given by Agapius and Dionysius, who do show some textual correspondences with each other. For an overview of the narrative of Khusrau's reign and wars against Byzantium and Heraclius' campaign to recover his empire see Stratos, *Seventh Century*, vol. 1; Kaegi, *Heraclius*; Howard-Johnston, 'Heraclius' Persian Campaigns'; Greatrex and Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier II*, 182–228.

2 Theophanes, 265 (here using a Byzantine source and not TC); Agapius, 441–44; Msyr 10.XXI, 381/360 (Hormizd), 10.XXIII, 386/371 (Khusrau); *Chron 1234*, 215–17. For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 115–16), which is fuller than, but close to, Msyr. Cf. Theophylact Simocatta, 4.6–10; *Chron Paschale*, 691; Sebeos, 75–76; *Chron Khuzistan*, 16–17; *Chron Siirt* LVIII, 465–67; Tabari, 1.993, 994, 998–99.

3 Hormizd IV, king of the Persians from 579 to 590; on his reign see *Elr*, 'Hormozd IV'.

4 Khusrau II, king of the Persians from 590–628 (he was crowned on 15 February 590); on his reign see *Elr*, 'Kosrow II'.

5 Khusrau's mistreatment and murder of his father is also recounted by Theophylact Simocatta, 4.7.1–3, but Sebeos, 75, reports that Hormizd was killed by 'the king's counsellors and the auxiliaries and the guards' before Khusrau's accession (cf. Eutychius, 115, and Tabari, 1.993). Theophylact is very negative towards Khusrau and this probably reflects Byzantine hostility towards him after his invasion of their empire.

6 Bahram Chobin, 'prince of the eastern regions of the land of Persia' according to Sebeos, 73–80, who recounts his competition with Khusrau for the imperial office. Bahram was a



Zab<sup>7</sup> where Bahram was entrenched. Supposing that some of his officers were attached to Bahram, Khusrau executed them. When this caused a commotion among the troops, Khusrau fled with a few of his supporters, and all of Khusrau's troops went over to Bahram. Khusrau was at a loss what to do, some advising him to go to the Turks, and others to the Romans. Mounting his horse, Khusrau gave it free rein and commanded everyone to follow the horse's direction. The horse moved in the direction of Roman territory. When Khusrau reached Circesium<sup>8</sup> he dispatched envoys to inform the Romans<sup>9</sup> of his arrival. The patrician<sup>10</sup> Probus, who chanced to be there, received him and informed the king (Maurice) by letter of what had occurred. Bahram, for his part, dispatched envoys to Maurice requesting him not to make an alliance with Khusrau. King Maurice<sup>11</sup> ordered the general Comentiolus<sup>12</sup> to receive Khusrau at Mabbug (Hierapolis)<sup>13</sup> and to treat him with regal honour.

Agapius: In year 8 of Maurice the Persians rose up against their king, Hormizd; they poked out his eyes and killed him. They fell into two parties, one with his son Khusrau and the other with a general<sup>14</sup> called Bahram. The

seasoned military man, having spent years fighting various tribes on Iran's eastern borders, whereas Khusrau was very young and inexperienced, and so sought the help of the Romans against Bahram. For this momentous action of Khusrau see Whitby, *Emperor Maurice*, 297–304; on Bahram himself see *Elr.* 'Bahrām Čōbīn'.

7 The Greater Zab river, as opposed to the Lesser Zab river, which lies a little to the south. Both are tributaries of the Tigris river in modern north-east Iraq.

8 A city founded by Emperor Diocletian (285–305) at the confluence of the Khabur and Euphrates rivers in modern north-east Syria. The Syriac (*Qrqyswn*) and Arabic (*Qarqisiyā*) names are derived from the Greek form (*Kirkēsion*).

9 I will use the term 'Roman' in the translation to designate citizens of the empire ruled from Constantinople, since that is the term contemporaries used (in Greek, Syriac and Arabic), but in the footnotes I will use the term 'Byzantine', since that is the one used by modern scholars.

10 This term (Latin: *patricius*, Greek: *patrikios*) originally referred to a group of elite families in ancient Rome, including both their natural and adopted members, but it became opened up and somewhat devalued in the later Roman period, used by a broad range of high-ranking officials and allies of the Empire.

11 Emperor of Byzantium 582–602; see *ODB*, 'Maurice'.

12 One of Maurice's most loyal generals; see *PLRE*, 'Comentiolus 1'.

13 Mabbug was called Hierapolis in Greek and Manbij in Arabic, which is the name of the modern city in northern Syria. The chronicler Agapius was from this city; since he is always referred to as Agapius of Manbij, I have kept this designation in this book rather than calling him Agapius of Mabbug. Theophylact Simocatta, 4.12.8, also notes that Khusrau went to Mabbug and was met by the general Comentiolus.

14 *Marzbān*, or *marzpān*, from the Persian word for 'protector of the border'; see *El*, 'Marzpān'.

party whose adherents were with Khusrau son of Hormizd took the initiative and they made him king over them. The general Bahram had been raiding the Daylamites<sup>15</sup> and was not present on the day Khusrau was crowned. When he had finished his assault on the Daylamites, he wrote to Khusrau saying: 'I do not recognise you, so you must either step down from the rule or declare war.' Bahram had many troops and Khusrau son of Hormizd was young, so he was afraid to fight Bahram. He, therefore, thought to seek the help of the leader of the Romans. So he summoned one of his servants whom he trusted and informed him of what he had resolved to do. When he had heard the word of the king, he went out in secret and headed for the Roman camp. He entered and encountered one of the commanders of the Arabs, a man named Jafna,<sup>16</sup> who was allied to the Romans. He gave him this news and when Jafna heard that, he set off for Constantinople and it was not long before he reached the king. The latter (on seeing him) cried out, saying: 'What do you want?' Jafna replied: 'I wish to tell the king a secret that I have and inform him of an extraordinary affair.' The king feared that Jafna sought to do him harm and so ordered him to take off his clothes. He approached the king in just his loin cloth and said: 'O king, I want to be your envoy to the ruler of the Persians so that he might submit and be subject to you.' The king retorted: 'I think that you are talking pure nonsense.' Jafna took out the letter which Khusrau had written and read it out.<sup>17</sup> The king understood what was in it and was delighted with that. Thereupon the king commanded him to bring Khusrau to him so that he might perform for him all that he needed and help him against his enemies. Maurice wrote a response to Khusrau's letter and Jafna took it and returned. He came to Khusrau with the servant, handed the letter to him and made him aware that the king was well disposed towards him. When Khusrau read the letter, he departed from his realm disguised as a beggar and traversed the Persian Empire, passing by Nisibis and continuing on to Edessa. He entered it and went up to its governor, informing him of who he was and what had happened to him. The official embraced him, treated him well and performed everything necessary for him. He then wrote to the (Roman) king about his situation. Maurice wrote a letter to Khusrau, instructing him to make his way to Mabbug and

15 The inhabitants of Daylam, a region on the south side of the Caspian Sea corresponding to modern Gilan province in Iran.

16 *Chron* 1234 calls him Abu Jafna Nu'man ibn al-Mundhir (see *PLRE*, 'Jafnah'), who was a chief of the Ghassanids, the principal Arab allies of the Romans, on whom see most recently Fisher, *Between Empires*.

17 Theophylact Simocatta, 4.11, gives the purported text of this letter.



to wait there until the army came to him with what he needed so that he would still be near to his own empire and would be able to return quickly to (confront) his enemy before he seized his rule. When Khusrau read the letter of Maurice, he was delighted with its contents.<sup>18</sup>

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron* 1234.

*Chron* 1234: In year 8 of Maurice the Persians revolted against their king, Hormizd. When they got their hands on him they gouged out his eyes. Shortly after their ruler Hormizd had been blinded, the Persians appointed his son Khusrau to rule over them in place of his father. This Khusrau was called Parvez ('Victorious'). However, one of his generals, who had been campaigning with his army in the east, was returning in glorious victory when he heard of what the Persians had done to Hormizd and how they had raised up his son as successor. In the arrogance of his success he dismissed Khusrau as a mere child, held him in contempt and rebelled against him. He took his troops with him and marched against Khusrau; the name of this rebel was Bahram. As for Khusrau, when he heard of the audacious aggression of Bahram, he panicked and was unsure what he should do, because the majority of the Persians were at one with Bahram. Khusrau decided to seek refuge with the king of the Romans. He sent for the Arab general who dwelt at Rusafa as a subject of the Romans, a zealous Christian man called Abu Jafna Nu'man ibn al-Mundhir.<sup>19</sup> When he arrived he gave him a letter to take to King Maurice. He sped to Maurice, gave him the letter from Khusrau and explained to him how dramatic the situation was and that Khusrau was standing ready to come to the king as soon as he had his leave to do so. As for Maurice, when he had read the letter and understood its contents, he granted his request and sent him word to come to him, promising that he would help him. Abu Jafna conveyed this message back to Khusrau. When the latter heard what Maurice had promised he left his palace, taking care to avoid being observed, and rode like a wild warrior across the border out of Persia until he reached Mesopotamia<sup>20</sup> and the city

18 Agapius proceeds to give the text of Khusrau's letter in reply to Maurice.

19 MSyr just says: 'He sent him (Maurice) a letter in secret, by the intermediary of the commander of the Roman army, who was at Rusafa' and makes no further reference to this intermediary. Rusafa, known in Greek as Sergiopolis for its connection with St Sergius, was an important Roman town, just south of modern Raqqa in north central Syria, and was a popular pilgrimage location for Arab Christians before Islam.

20 Mesopotamia is Greek for 'between the rivers' (in Syriac: Beth Nahrayn), meaning the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern Iraq and south-east Turkey. In this book, however, we are not in general intending the whole region down to the Persian Gulf in the south, but just

of Edessa.<sup>21</sup> There he remained, waiting for orders from Maurice, and was received as a guest in the house of John of Rusafa,<sup>22</sup> the governor of Edessa, who accorded him the highest honours, truly royal honours past compare. As for the recompense which Khusrau had in store for John, we shall relate that later, if God gives us strength. While Khusrau was in Edessa a letter came to him from Maurice instructing him to direct his steps to Mabbug and to wait there for his reply.<sup>23</sup>

### (590–91) Khusrau defeats Bahram and recovers his kingdom<sup>24</sup>

Theophanes: King Maurice, having adopted Khusrau, king of the Persians, as his son, sent to him his kinsman Domitianus, bishop of Melitene,<sup>25</sup> with Narses,<sup>26</sup> to whom he had entrusted the command of the war. They invaded Persia with Khusrau and the entire Roman forces... The Roman army, after capturing Bahram's tent and baggage along with the elephants, brought them to Khusrau. Bahram made his escape to the inner regions of Persia, and in this way the war against him ended. Khusrau, having won a great victory, regained his throne and gave a victory banquet for the Romans.

Agapius: When Maurice read the letter (of Khusrau), he assembled the commanders of the Romans, their patricians, warriors and city leaders, and

the upper portion, what in Arabic was called al-Jazira 'the island'. It was called this because it begins in the south where the two rivers come close together, just above Baghdad, and ends in the north where the sources of the two rivers come close together, in modern south-east Turkey, so almost forming an island. On early Islamic Mesopotamia see Robinson, *Empires and Elites*.

21 This is the Greek name for this famous Mesopotamian city, now in modern southern Turkey. The Syriac name was Urhay and the Arabic al-Ruha; in Turkish it was called Urfa and its modern name, Şanlıurfa, means 'glorious Urfa'.

22 We only know of this person from Dionysius who portrays him as a wealthy nobleman of Edessa.

23 Like Agapius, Dionysius now has Khusrau write a reply to Maurice's letter.

24 Theophanes, 266–67 (using a Byzantine source); Agapius, 444–47; MSyr 10.XXIII, 386–87/371–72; *Chron* 1234, 216–17. For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron* 1234 (tr. Palmer, 116–17), which is fuller than, but close to, MSyr. Cf. Theophylact Simocatta, 4.13.3–4.14.4 (Maurice convenes a council to hear Khusrau's case), 5.1–11 (the contest between Bahram and Khusrau); Sebeos, 76–84; Eutychius, 117; Tabari, 1.999–1000.

25 He was the son of Maurice's brother Peter. He served as bishop of Melitene (medieval and modern Malatya, in south central Turkey) from ca. 580 until 602 (PLRE, 'Domitianus'). Theophylact Simocatta, 4.14.5, also says that Maurice sent Domitianus to Khusrau.

26 Narses was head of the army in the East (i.e. *magister militum per Orientem*) ca. 591–603 (PLRE, 'Narses 10').



ordered the letter to be read out to them. When it had been read, everyone consulted with his fellow as to his opinion. Having got through all their responses, the king found himself alone in his view. He nevertheless resolved to answer the one who had petitioned him and to help the one who had sought his aid.<sup>27</sup> He therefore ordered the armies to prepare to depart and to bring with them such monies as would be useful for him (Khusrau). The men marched out to him (Khusrau), their number being 40,000 warriors along with all the equipment of war and significant monies. Maurice also wrote to him (Khusrau) a letter of reply...<sup>28</sup> When the troops reached Khusrau, son of Hormizd, and the letter of the king (Maurice) came to him, he took the monies and set off towards the enemy. When Bahram heard of the flight of Khusrau to the Romans, he went to Ctesiphon (Mahuza)<sup>29</sup> and seized the wealth in the treasury, the weapons and all the goods. He burned the entire city and destroyed the residences of Khusrau and readied for battle. Khusrau, son of Hormizd, marched with the Roman troops towards him and encountered him between Ctesiphon (Mada'in) and Wasit.<sup>30</sup> Bahram suffered defeat and all his men were killed; his wealth and camps were pillaged. Khusrau was returned to the throne and took his seat on it, and all the people pledged allegiance to him. When he had rested a little, he summoned the Romans, rewarded them well and sent them back to their ruler. He bestowed on Maurice, king of the Romans, several times as much money as the latter had given him, and gifts as well. He then proceeded to return Dara<sup>31</sup> to the Romans, seventeen years after it had been conquered by the Persians. (He did) the same for Mayferqat<sup>32</sup> and removed all the

27 Theophylact Simocatta, 4.14.1, says that the senate and Maurice agreed on helping Khusrau, but Sebeos, 76, and John of Nikiu, xcvi.10–12, concur with Agapius that Maurice had to overrule the opposition of the senate.

28 Agapius now gives the text of this letter from Maurice, which is quite lengthy.

29 Ctesiphon was the capital of the Sasanian Empire, located on the east bank of the Tigris some 30 km south-east of modern Baghdad. There was also the Hellenistic city of Seleucia on the west bank. They were sometimes referred to together as 'the settlements': *Māhūzē* in Syriac (as here, but rendered into Arabic letters as *Māhūza*) and *Madā'in* in Arabic (a couple of lines further on). See *Elr*, 'Madā'en'.

30 Wasit is a town on the Tigris, south-east of Baghdad, but it was only founded ca. 702–3. For Mada'in see previous note.

31 Dara is modern Oğuz in south-east Turkey, very near the modern border with Syria.

32 Mayferqat (Greek: Martyropolis; Arabic: Mayyafariqin) corresponds to modern Silvan in south-east Turkey, ca. 80 km east of Amida (Diyarbakir). Theophylact Simocatta, 4.13.24, says that Khusrau offered to give back Dara and Mayferqat while he was still trying to persuade Maurice to come to his aid. Sebeos, 76 and 84, has Khusrau both pledge land in return for military aid and peace and give that land once he had defeated Bahram.

Persians who were in it. He kept back a group of Romans whom he placed in charge of his treasuries. He ordered the construction of two churches for the Christians, one at Ctesiphon (Mada'in) dedicated to Our Lady Mary, the other dedicated to the martyr Mar<sup>33</sup> Sergius. He brought Anastasius, patriarch of Antioch, to consecrate them and to arrange priests and deacons for them. Khusrau rewarded him well, I mean Anastasius, and he departed. This occurred at the end of AG 902 (590–91).

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron* 1234.

*Chron* 1234: When Maurice received Khusrau's letter, he convened an assembly of leading Romans and ordered the letter of Khusrau to be read out loud. Then he sent John,<sup>34</sup> the general of the division of Thrace, with an army of 20,000, and the general Anastasius<sup>35</sup> with 20,000 men from the Armenian and Bucellarian<sup>36</sup> divisions. He also sent him forty hundredweight of gold coins for his expenses. When these reached Khusrau he set off on the march to his country. As for the rebel Bahram, after Khusrau had left, he came to Ctesiphon, seized the kingdom and the royal treasury and burned down the royal palaces, having taken from them all the loot he could find. When he heard of Khusrau's return, he made ready to do battle with him. When Khusrau reached Persian territory, the general Romizan<sup>37</sup> joined him, adding his 10,000 Persians to the army of the Romans and became his ally. The battle with Bahram was bitterly fought, but the rebels were routed; many were slaughtered and the rest were made subject to Khusrau. Thus the latter recovered his kingdom. When he had established his position, he granted to the Romans everything they had pillaged and snatched from the Persian army in the battle and gave them in addition forty silver coins for each mounted soldier. After this he dismissed them and they returned

33 Lord, Master; a respectful form of address, used especially for ecclesiastics and saints.

34 Presumably the John Mystakon who Theophanes and Theophylact Simocatta (4.15.2–4) and Sebeos (77) say was sent by Maurice to help Narses in recovering Khusrau's kingdom. He would seem to have been commander in Armenia at the time, though he had previously been a commander in Thrace; see *PLRE*, 'Ioannes qui et Mystacon 101'.

35 A mistake for Narses according to *PLRE*, 'Anastasius' (at the end of the list after 'Anastasius 41').

36 *Bwql'ryw*: from Greek *boukellarioi*, meaning privately hired soldiers rather than state-recruited troops, though the term came to designate, perhaps already by the seventh century, an elite unit of the Opsikion army (*ODB*, 'Boukellarioi'). Bar Hebraeus, *CS*, 92, probably wrongly, writes *bwlgr'ryw* 'Bulgarians'.

37 The general who, under the sobriquet of Shahrbaraz ('wild boar of the realm'), was to spearhead Khusrau's invasion of the Byzantine Empire; see n. 54 below.



to Roman territory. To Maurice he sent many gifts, precious stones and garments of every kind, and he returned to him the city of Dara, which had been captured from the Romans. He also asked Maurice to give away his daughter Maria<sup>38</sup> to him in marriage and Maurice was delighted to consent to this request. He gave away his daughter to him and she was escorted on her mission with great honour. Maurice sent bishops and clergy with her and, at the command of Khusrau, two churches were built for his bride, one dedicated to Saint Sergius, the other to the Mother of God; Anastasius, the patriarch of Antioch, was sent to consecrate them.<sup>39</sup> There was profound peace between the Romans and the Persians and Khusrau treated Maurice with the respect due to a father.

#### Sundry natural disasters<sup>40</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: A great plague befell men in this year (AG 902/590–91); then a strong gale assailed them. The following year, AG 903, in the month of March, in the middle of the day, there was an eclipse of the sun and on the same day there was an earthquake. In year 14 of Maurice there was a heat so intense that it scorched the trees, the grapes, the vines and all vegetation. In year 16 of his reign the rain was so heavy that many settlements were drowned together with their residents and animals. Then there appeared locusts in numbers the like of which had never been seen before and they remained the whole year, eating and destroying. In year 17 of his reign there was a violent earthquake and a heavy snowfall.

MSyr: There was an eclipse of the sun and there was darkness, on 10 March, from the third to the sixth hour. On 2 April there was a violent earthquake;

38 *Chron Khuzistan*, 17, notes that Khusrau had two Christian wives, Shirin and Maria the Roman, but neither he nor any contemporary source mentions that the latter was Maurice's daughter, which would seem to be a later elaboration (it is in Tabari, 1.994 and 999, and Eutychius, 117, who notes that Maurice agreed to the marriage as long as Khusrau became a Christian, which he did).

39 MSyr's account is slightly different here: 'He returned Dara and Resh'aina to the Romans. Khusrau requested of Maurice that he give him in marriage his daughter Maria and she set off accompanied by bishops and people. Khusrau built three large churches and Anastasius, patriarch of Antioch, came down to consecrate them: one (was dedicated) to the Mother of God, one to the Apostles, and one to the martyr Mar Sergius.'

40 Agapius, 447; MSyr 10.XXIII, 387/373 (after AG 910). Elias of Nisibis, 124, year AG 912/600–1: 'There was an eclipse of the sun on Thursday, 10 March, in the middle of the day.'

many cities and regions were destroyed and their inhabitants buried; the earth boiled and cracked. There was plague and tumours; in the Imperial City there was severe plague. The following year the rains failed and there was a scorching wind and an intense dryness in all Syria and Palestine such that the olives and other trees became desiccated. The next year locusts descended on the lands of Syria in numbers the like of which had never been seen before; they destroyed the crops and the fruits of the trees. After three years the eggs that they had deposited caused ruin and the famine was made worse by the lack of resources.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (602) The army mutinies against Maurice and proclaims Phocas king<sup>41</sup>

Theophanes: In the month of November, indiction 6 (AD 602), the usurper Phocas,<sup>42</sup> upon his accession, slew Maurice together with his five male children...

Agapius: The great men of the Romans and their patricians assembled in the city of Heraclea,<sup>43</sup> including one of their patricians named Phocas, whom they wanted to make him king over them. Before that they had resolved to crown Peter, brother of Maurice,<sup>44</sup> because Maurice, after making peace with the Persians, cut the stipends of the soldiers and took their names off the payroll. They informed Peter, brother of Maurice, whom they wanted to make king over them, but he fled from them and proceeded to Constantinople. Then Maurice fled to Chalcedon.<sup>45</sup> When the Romans caught up with him, he was wearing rags after the fashion of beggars. They killed him, his children and his supporters and made Phocas king over them. He ruled for eight years from AG 914 (602–3). Phocas was not from the royal family.

41 Theophanes, 290–91 (using a Byzantine source); Agapius, 447–48; MSyr 10.XXIV, 388–89/374–75 (AG 914); *Chron 1234*, 218–19. Cf. Theophylact Simocatta, 8.6.2–8.10.8; Sebeos, 106; Eutychius, 118.

42 An army officer who served in Maurice's Balkan campaigns; he reigned as emperor 602–10. On him and his mutiny see *ODB*, 'Phocas, king (602–10)'; Whitby, *Emperor Maurice*, 24–27; Olster, *Politics of Usurpation*, 49–65.

43 On the northern coast of the Sea of Marmara, about 90 km west of Constantinople.

44 *PLRE*, 'Petrus 55'.

45 An ancient coastal town of Bithynia, in Asia Minor, opposite Constantinople; it now lies within the city of Istanbul, in the district of Kadıköy.



MSyr:<sup>46</sup> Maurice became arrogant in his way of thinking and carried away with thoughts of vanity. He scorned the leaders and all the Roman troops, and **would not give them their stipends**. Every one was very discontented. When the Bulgars began to plunder the land of Thrace, the Romans marched against them with Philippicus;<sup>47</sup> they defeated the Bulgars and returned. The king did not even then judge them worthy of their stipends. Therefore the leaders **assembled and sent to him** (saying): **God has granted peace in your days, but peace does not feed the cavalry unless they receive their due**. Now, if you do not give us our due, know that we will be your enemies. He, however, acting like Rehoboam, did not heed their threats, but rather scorned them.<sup>48</sup> They asked of Peter, his brother, that he reign over them, but he did not want to. He fled to Maurice to inform him. When Maurice heard (this), he was afraid and fled, going into hiding in Chalcedon. When the army arrived at the royal city and did not find Maurice, it established as king an old contemptible man called Phocas. Then they went out and found Maurice, whom they brought to the (royal) city. They killed his children in front of him and then killed him too. He had reigned twenty years. He was killed in the year AG 914 (602–3), when Phocas' reign began.

*Chron 1234*: In year 20 of Maurice his army mutinied against him because he would not give them their stipends and gifts, as is the custom for kings to do, for he felt certain that he had no enemy left. Many of them assembled and sent to him (saying) thus: 'God has granted peace in your days, but peace does not feed the cavalry unless they receive their due. If you henceforth give us our due, as is the custom, we will be your servants; if you do not, we will be your enemies.' King Maurice, however, acted like Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and did not heed their threats, but rather scorned them. So they approached Peter, their general, who was the king's brother, and asked him to reign over them, but he refused them and would not be persuaded. He went to the king and informed him of the soldiers' discontent and of their request that he should be king over them. When Maurice heard this from his brother, he was afraid and fled to the city of Chalcedon. When the Roman army came to the royal city and

46 As explained in the 'working principles' above, I indicate the words that are found in both MSyr and *Chron 1234* by the use of boldface.

47 Maurice's brother-in-law; see *PLRE*, 'Philippicus 3' (which places the campaign in autumn–winter 598).

48 The allusion is to 1 Kings 12:1–15 which tells how the Israelite king Rehoboam increases the taxes of his subjects against the advice of the elders of his kingdom.

did not find Maurice, since he had fled to Chalcedon, they sought him out and found him. Then they took him back to Constantinople and killed his children in front of him and then put an end to his life too. One consequence of this was that Mundhir, the king of the Arabs, was released from exile and went back to his country. Then the army got hold of a contemptible Roman man called Phocas and made him king over them, in the year AG 914 (602–3), the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Khusrau (602–3).

{The revolt of general Narses against Phocas at Edessa}.<sup>49</sup>

#### Khusrau initiates war on Byzantium<sup>50</sup>

Theophanes: Khusrau collected his forces and marched on Dara, while Narses (who had rebelled against Phocas) departed from Edessa and took refuge at Mabbug. Khusrau met the Romans at Arxamoun<sup>51</sup> and, setting his elephants in a fort-like formation, went into battle and won a great victory.<sup>52</sup> (The next year) Khusrau sent out Kardigan (Kardarigan)<sup>53</sup> and Romizan<sup>54</sup> (Rousmiazan) and they captured many Roman cities. The Persians captured Dara and all of Mesopotamia and Syria, taking an innumerable multitude of captives.

49 This is related by Theophanes, 291–93, and Dionysius (in MSyr 10.XXV, 390/379, and *Chron 1234*, 219–20). However, since Theophanes is in general using a Byzantine source for this period and since his account of Narses' revolt is very brief, it is not possible to say whether this notice comes from TC (it is not in Agapius). Cf. Jacob of Edessa, 324; *Chron Zuqnin*, 148. As noted in the 'working principles' section above, I give in curly brackets notices that, though they are only found in one of TC's dependants (and Theophanes is most likely using his Byzantine source here), adduce material apparently of eastern origin.

50 Theophanes, 292–93 (probably using a Byzantine source); Agapius, 448; MSyr 10.XXV, 389–90/377–78; *Chron 1234*, 220–21. Cf. *Chron 724*, 145 (AG 915/603–4: capture of Dara); Sebeos, 107; *Chron Khuzistan*, 20–21; Jacob of Edessa, 324 (capture of Dara); *Chron Siirt LXXIX*, 519–20.

51 Probably refers to the river Arzamon in the Mesopotamian plain south of Mardin (in modern south Turkey).

52 I use this sign in this book to indicate the move from one year's entry to another in the original chronicle.

53 Theophanes always writes his name Kardarigan, but Syriac and Arabic authors write it Kardigan, which I adopt in this translation.

54 Two of the most important Persian generals of this early seventh-century Persian campaign against the Romans. Romizan (Erazman in Persian) is particularly well attested in our sources; his personal name was Khoream, and, as Dionysius says, he was subsequently known by the title Shahrbaraz, 'wild boar of the realm'. Kardigan is also an honorific title, meaning 'black hawk'.



Agapius: When Khusrau heard of the murder of Maurice he broke the agreement between him and the Romans and annulled the peace treaty between them; he marched on Dara and captured it.

MSyr: When Khusrau, the king of the Persians, heard that Maurice and his sons had been killed by the Romans, he was seized with great grief. He wore black clothes. And he ordered that all the nobles wear black. They made lamentations for many days and during the laments he related to the Persian people the good deeds that Maurice had done for him, Khusrau, and for the whole Persian kingdom. Having taken advice, he was determined to take control of the whole Roman Empire, for he deemed it right to take vengeance on those who had attacked the (Roman) king.<sup>55</sup> With the troops reassembled, he said: 'Which of you generals and nobles of my kingdom is ready to serve my purpose as regards the vengeance that I am prepared to wreak against the Roman Empire?' Thereupon Romizan, a powerful diligent man, with considerable experience in combat, came out from among the ranks, stood in the centre of them, joined his hands and said to the king: 'I am ready to accomplish your purpose; I will do battle with the Romans. I show no compassion for the aged or the young.' The king rejoiced and said: 'No longer will you be called Romizan, but rather Shahrbaraz, which signifies the wild boar!' When he had readied many people he invaded the land of the Romans. In the year AG 915 (603–4), year 2 of Phocas, they captured Dara and reached as far as Tur 'Abdin.<sup>56</sup>

*Chron 1234*: When Khusrau, the king of the Persians, received news that Maurice had been killed unlawfully, he was seized with great grief and sorrow and was filled with anger and fury. He wore black clothes and mourned for him as for a father. He assembled his troops and spoke to them about the many good deeds that Maurice had accomplished for him and of how he had got his kingdom back by Maurice's agency. And he ordered that all his troops wear black. They performed some days of mourning. With the troops reassembled, he distributed gifts to them and said: 'I am ready to exact vengeance on the Romans. Which of you

55 Interestingly the motive of vengeance for Maurice is also cited in Muslim sources (e.g. Tabari, 1.1001–2) and in Eutychius, 118, perhaps via Muslim sources.

56 MSyr goes on to give additional details about the Persians in the region of Tur 'Abdin (in modern south central Turkey) and observes that the Persians 'harmed no one but the Romans, whom they killed wherever they found them', implying a distinction between the Romans (*rūmāyē*) and the rest of the population; very likely this distinction was soldier / civilian, though it might have included other elements (Greek-speaking / Syriac-speaking; Chalcedonian / Miaphysite).

distinguished generals and nobles of the Persians is ready to serve my purpose?' Thereupon Romizan, a powerful diligent man, with considerable experience in combat, said in reply: 'I am ready to accomplish your purpose; I will have the strength to do battle with the Romans. I flinch from nothing; I show no compassion nor pity nor remorse for any man; I know no reverence nor regret for the aged or the young.' When he heard his words Khusrau rejoiced greatly and said: 'No longer will you be called Romizan, but rather Shahrbaraz, that is, the wild boar!' When he had received troops he invaded the land of the Romans with Khusrau following after him. He came to the city of Dara and besieged it; after nine months he stormed it and took it. Mardin, that inaccessible rock, held out for two and a half years before it fell to the Persians in AG 919 (617–18).<sup>57</sup>

#### (610) The Persians cross the Euphrates<sup>58</sup>

Theophanes: The Persians crossed the Euphrates and captured all of Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia, wreaking great devastation among the Romans. The Persians marched out under the command of Kardigan and occupied Armenia and Cappadocia and defeated the Roman armies in battle. They took Galatia and Paphlagonia and advanced as far as Chalcedon, killing indiscriminately people of every age. And while the Persians were oppressing the Romans outside the city, Phocas was committing worse crimes inside by murdering and imprisoning people.<sup>59</sup>

57 MSyr has AG 918 (616–17). Dionysius goes on to relate (directly so in *Chron 1234*, but in a separate column in MSyr) at great length the anecdote about Khusrau's visit to John of Rusafa that he promised earlier (at the end of Dionysius' account of Khusrau's flight to Byzantium narrated above). To sum it up, Khusrau enjoyed sumptuous hospitality at the palace of John of Rusafa, a wealthy nobleman of Edessa and endowed with 'a certain status in the civil hierarchy of the Roman Empire', but John's wife's reluctance to serve wine to Khusrau was later reported back to Khusrau as disdain for him. When Khusrau subsequently conquered Edessa, he had her deported to Persia and imprisoned, whereas her son, Sergius, he treated with honour 'in remembrance of his father's hospitality'.

58 Theophanes, 295–96; Agapius, 449 (Phocas, year 8/609–10); MSyr 10.XXV, 391/378 (AG 921/609–10); *Chron 1234*, 224 (AG 922/610–11, Phocas 8). *Chron 724*, 146, has: 'On 7 August of the same year (AG 921/610) Shahrbaraz crossed to Zenobia and took it; this was the first city west of the Euphrates to be taken.' Cf. Sebeos, 110–11; Jacob of Edessa, 324 (Amida, Tella, Resh'aina), 325 (Edessa); John of Nikiu, CIX.21 (Antioch).

59 This sentence is also found in Nicephorus, §1 ('while the Persians were injuring the Roman state from without Phocas was doing worse things within'), and it may derive ultimately from the continuation of John of Antioch (see Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, 142).



Agapius: The Persians attacked Amida and captured it. Then they turned to Qenneshre and returned to Edessa.

MSyr: **The Persians crossed** to the west side of **the Euphrates** and captured Mabbug, Qenneshre, Aleppo (Beroia) and Antioch.<sup>60</sup> **And while the Persians** were doing these things, **Phocas was killing the leaders from within**, and many other people, **until** almost all the free men and those capable of fighting were done away with.

*Chron 1234*: **The Persians crossed the Euphrates**, subjected the whole of Syria and expelled the Romans from it. Shahrbaraz was at their heels all the way, routing them wherever he caught up with them. He killed and enslaved, sending the captives to Khusrau. Thus he passed through the regions of Cappadocia and Galatia and reached the vicinity of Constantinople. There was no region that rose up against him which he did not devastate and destroy, killing its men and enslaving its populace. **And while the Persians** were thus ruining Roman territory, **Phocas** was outdoing them **from within** by his lack of clemency, **killing the leaders** of the Romans **until** his kingdom was bereft of powerful men.

#### A Jewish riot at Antioch<sup>61</sup>

Theophanes: The Jews of Antioch, becoming disorderly, staged an uprising against the Christians and murdered Anastasius, the great patriarch of Antioch,<sup>62</sup> whose genitals they put in his mouth. After this they dragged him along the main street and they killed many landowners and burned them. Phocas appointed Bonosus chief governor of the East and Cottanas

60 These are all settlements in northern Syria: Mabbug is modern Manbij; Qenneshre lay alongside the Euphrates (the monastery of Qenneshre was on the east bank), just on the Syrian side of the modern border with Turkey; Aleppo is the modern rendering of Syriac and Arabic: Halab (Greek: Beroia; sometimes rendered thus by Syriac writers, as here by Msyr); and Antioch is modern Antakya in the southernmost part of central Turkey.

61 Theophanes, 296; Agapius, 449 (Ph 8); Msyr 10.XXV, 392/379. On this pogrom see Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1.357–58, n. IV; Olster, *Politics of Usurpation*, 101–5, who feels that it has been confused with an earlier riot at Antioch involving the circus factions. Cf. Msyr 10.XXV, 391/378: 'The Blues and Greens fought with each other; the cities were devastated and Phocas sent into Syria a general who killed a great number of men' (a reference to Phocas' dispatch of Bonosus); Sebeos, 106: 'Phocas sent a certain prince, Bonosus, with an army, against Antioch and Jerusalem and all regions of that land'; John of Nikiu, CIV.

62 Anastasius II of Antioch (599–609); *Chron Paschale*, 699, has him murdered by soldiers in September 610 (probably one should emend to 609). See PLRE, 'Anastasius 27'.

military commander and sent them against the Jews, but they were unable to stop the uprising.<sup>63</sup> So they gathered troops and attacked them, and many of them they killed and maimed and banished from the city.

Agapius: There occurred in the Syrias<sup>64</sup> a great misfortune. The Jews who were in them and in Mesopotamia resolved to kill the Christians in every city and to destroy their churches. While they were doing that, they were denounced to the authorities. Then the Christians attacked them and killed a great number of them. When that reached Phocas, he was angry against the Christians<sup>65</sup> and increased their taxes at Antioch, Laodicea, the rest of the Syrias and Mesopotamia.

MSyr: The Jews who were at Antioch stirred up trouble and killed many people. They even killed Anastasius, patriarch of the Chalcedonians.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### A severe cold<sup>66</sup>

Theophanes: There was very severe cold so that the sea froze and, in these conditions, many fish were cast out.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: There was such a cold that the shore of the sea froze.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (610) Heraclius overthrows Phocas<sup>67</sup>

Theophanes: Heraclius, governor of Africa, pressed by the Senate, equipped his son Heraclius so as to send him against the usurper Phocas. Likewise

63 For these two figures see PLRE, 'Bonosus 2' and 'Cottanas'.

64 *Al-shāmāt*, Agapius uses this term frequently; Yaqut, s.v., says it refers to Bilād al-Shām, which is equivalent to our term 'the Levant'; the plural perhaps reflects the early Islamic provinces of Palestine, Jordan, Damascus, Hims and Qinnasrin (see Cobb, *White Banners*, 12) and/or the Roman provinces of Syria Coele, Syria Phoenicia and Syria Palestina.

65 The sense would seem to demand that 'Jews' is meant here.

66 Theophanes, 297; Msyr 10.XXV, 392/379 (AG 922/610–11; Msyr reports another cold spell, when the Euphrates froze, in AG 918/616–17). Cf. *Chron* 724, 146 (AG 920/608–09).

67 Theophanes, 297–99; Agapius, 449–50 (Ph 8); Msyr 10.XXV, 391/378; *Chron 1234*, 225–26. Cf. Eutychius, 122–23. See Olster, *Politics of Usurpation*, 117–38.



his second-in-command, Gregory, sent by land his son Nicetas, and they agreed that the one who would come first and vanquish the usurper would become king...<sup>68</sup> | On 4 October, a Monday, indiction 14 (610), Heraclius arrived from Africa bringing fortified ships... and likewise Nicetas, the son of the patrician Gregory, came from Alexandria and the Pentapolis,<sup>69</sup> having with him a big host of infantry... When Heraclius reached Constantinople, he put in at the harbour of Sophia and, after giving battle, he defeated the usurper Phocas.<sup>70</sup>

Agapius: Two rebels rose up against Phocas, king of the Romans, in Africa, one of them (named) Heraclius, the other Gregory. They dispatched troops with two men of their following and instructed the two of them, that is, Heraclius son of Heraclius and Nicetas son of Gregory, to kill Phocas. They made a pact between them that the rule would go to the one who got to Constantinople first to kill Phocas. Heraclius son of Heraclius took to the sea, finding it calm and serene, while Nicetas went by land. Heraclius arrived ahead of Nicetas, entered the city and killed Phocas. Heraclius reigned thirty-one years and five months from the year AG 922 (610–11). | Nicetas, son of Gregory, reached Alexandria and seized it.

MSyr: The news of the **wicked deeds** of Phocas was heard abroad. **In Africa** there were **two patricians**, of surpassing valour; **one was called Gregory and the other Heraclius**. Both, of one mind, **revolted against Phocas**. **They sent their sons with troops** and **agreed** that one would go **by sea** and the other **by land** and that whichever arrived **first would be king** and the other would be second-in-command. The son of Heraclius, who was also called Heraclius and to whom the lot fell to go by sea, arrived first at

68 Cf. *Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §6: 'A pact was agreed between them (Heraclius and Nicetas) that whoever of them arrived first at Constantinople, on him would be conferred administration of the whole empire'; *Chron Siirt LXXXII*, 526–27: 'They (Heraclius and Nicetas) made an agreement that whichever of them was the first to fight (Phocas) and win would obtain the rule.' The pact is also mentioned in Nicephorus, §1, and *Chron Paschale*, 699–701, and presumably, therefore, it derives ultimately from a Byzantine source, possibly the continuation of John of Antioch (see Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, 142). See *ODB*, 'Herakleios, king (610–41)' and Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 37–51 (who dismisses the pact as a fable, as does Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, 203).

69 Five key cities of Late Roman North Africa (Cyrene, Apollonia, Ptolemais, Barca and Berenice), all in modern Libya. Note that Africa in TC always signifies north-west Africa, near the Mediterranean coast.

70 For the characters in this entry see *PLRE*, 'Gregaras 3', 'Heraclius 3', 'Heraclius 4' and 'Nicetas 7'.

Constantinople, as a **favourable wind** was blowing. When its citizens heard this, they rejoiced and all the people were excited **to meet him** and they **brought him in with pomp**. **Phocas was killed** by the Romans and as he had done so it was done to him. Heraclius then began to reign, in the year AG 922 (610–11).

*Chron 1234*: Great and **wicked deeds** were being performed against the Romans, not only by the Persians, but also, and above all, by King Phocas himself, and when they heard (of this and) of Phocas' disgusting behaviour and of the cruelty which he visited upon the army, **two men of patrician rank**, who were **in Africa**, decided to **revolt against him**. **One was called Gregory and the other Heraclius**. Both were advanced in years and sage in understanding; there was none better than them in the whole senate. Gregory had a son called Nicetas and Heraclius had a son called after his father, Heraclius. These two men, motivated by a feeling of outrage, gave to each **son sufficient troops** and **sent** them to fight with Phocas. They **agreed** that if Nicetas got to Constantinople before Heraclius, he **would be king** of the Romans, but if Heraclius got there **first**, the empire was to be his. It was determined that Nicetas would set off **by land** and Heraclius would sail **by sea**. After their departure Heraclius' journey was aided by a **favourable wind**;<sup>71</sup> and all was calm and without any impediment. Therefore, they arrived at one of the harbours of the Royal City well in advance of Nicetas. The entire city went out **to meet him**, the senate and the populace, and **they brought him in with great pomp**. **They killed Phocas** and enthroned Heraclius. Thus Phocas was killed after ruling for eight years.

#### Heraclius seeks peace with the Persians<sup>72</sup>

Theophanes: King Heraclius sent ambassadors to Khusrau urging him to cease shedding pitilessly the blood of men, to appoint levies and receive tribute. But the latter dismissed the ambassadors empty-handed, without having spoken to them, for he hoped to seize the Roman state in its entirety.

71 Cf. *Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §6: 'And so Heraclius, setting out from Africa, reached the royal city more swiftly by sailing'; *Chron Siirt LXXXII*, 526–27: 'Heraclius, son of the governor of Egypt, proceeded by water, whereas Nicetas, son of Gregory, governor of Africa, went on horseback. The wind propelled the one going by sea and his ships reached Constantinople and the ministers went out to meet him.'

72 Theophanes, 300; Agapius, 450; MSyr 11.I, 403/400; *Chron 1234*, 226. Cf. Sebeos, 113; see Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 65.



Agapius: In the first year of his reign Heraclius sent ambassadors to the Persian king to make peace with him, but he did not consent to it. When the Persians heard that Heraclius was on the throne, they attacked Antioch, killed its patriarch and enslaved its people.

MSyr: **When Heraclius sat upon the imperial throne, he sent ambassadors to Khusrau**, king of the Persians, concerning **peace**. Heraclius said that since Phocas killed Maurice, the king who was beloved to you, we have killed him; by reassuring words such as these he hoped there would be a truce, but Khusrau was not persuaded. **Not only did Khusrau not make a truce with the Romans, but he took**<sup>73</sup> the rest of their land from them.

*Chron 1234*: **When Heraclius sat upon the imperial throne, he sent ambassadors to Khusrau**, seeking from him **peace**. **Not only did Khusrau not consent to make peace, but he** issued threats against the Romans.

#### (610–12) The Persians advance into Syria and Asia Minor<sup>74</sup>

Theophanes: In the month of May the Persians marched into Syria and they took Apamea and Edessa and came as far as Antioch. The Romans met them and gave battle, but they were defeated and the entire Roman host perished so that very few escaped. | The Persians captured Caesarea in Cappadocia<sup>75</sup> and took therein many tens of thousands of captives.

Agapius: The Persians attacked the Romans and conquered Antioch. Then they turned upon Apamea and took it. Next they went to Hims and captured it. All this took place in October. The Romans assembled and fought them at *Dls*,<sup>76</sup> but they were defeated and a large number of them drowned in the river. The Persians captured Caesarea.

<sup>73</sup> Thus in the Arabic recension (*akhadha*); the verb is missing in the Syriac version.

<sup>74</sup> Theophanes, 299; Agapius, 450 (Heraclius, year 1); MSyr 10.XXV, 391/378 (AG 921/609–10) | 11.I, 403/400; *Chron 1234*, 226. Cf. *Chron 724*, 146 (AG 922: capture of Hims); Sebeos, 114–15; Jacob of Edessa, 325 (Edessa; 'all Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine').

<sup>75</sup> This is modern Kayseri in central Turkey.

<sup>76</sup> Written thus in the manuscript; Vasiliev reads 'ls and suggests the river Halys in modern north central Turkey. This is possible if we link it with the notice about the capture of Cappadocian Caesarea, but it seems rather to go with the capture of Hims. In this case one might think of the river Orontes, which runs through Hims; it was also known as the Belos (alluded to thus by the Byzantine scholar John Tzetzes; see Cohen, *Hellenistic Settlements in Syria*, 136, for the reference), which could be what underlies Agapius' *dls*/'ls.

MSyr: The Persians crossed to the west side of the Euphrates and took Mabbug, Qenneshre, Aleppo and Antioch. | **The Persians besieged Antioch and captured it**. The Roman troops went out to fight the Persians, but they were defeated and the Persians killed a large number of them. In the second year of Heraclius, 22<sup>nd</sup> of Khusrau, **the Persian commander Bahram took Caesarea in Cappadocia**;<sup>77</sup> **he killed** a great multitude in it, **took prisoner everyone else and then returned**.

*Chron 1234*: At the turn of the year (AG 923/611–12), on the eighth day of the month of October, **the Persians captured Antioch**. On the fifteenth day of the same month they took Apamea and came to Hims in Phoenicia. They (the people of Hims) surrendered and submitted themselves to the Persians. In this year the Roman army came to Syria; the Persian army came upon them, gave them battle and many Romans were slaughtered. In the same year **the Persian general Bahram besieged Caesarea**, a city in Cappadocia; **he killed and took prisoner many in it and then returned**.

#### A Saracen incursion into Syria<sup>78</sup>

Theophanes: The Saracens invaded Syria and, after devastating several villages, returned home.

Agapius: not recorded, though he does say on page 451: 'In the fourth year of Heraclius the Arabs came to power' and: 'In the tenth year of Heraclius the Arabs became active in Yathrib,<sup>79</sup> in AG 931' (619–20).

MSyr: A band of Arabs<sup>80</sup> came out of Arabia into the regions of Syria. They

<sup>77</sup> The general in overall charge of this campaign was Shahin Patgosapan (Sebeos, 112); either Dionysius is confused or Bahram is the name of a more junior officer on the campaign.

<sup>78</sup> Theophanes, 300; MSyr 11.I, 403/401. Both date the incident to the first year of Heraclius, but MSyr places it after an eclipse, which must be that of 4 November 617 (Schöve, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 115–16), and so one wonders whether to connect this with the notice in *Chron 775* and *Ehresh Inscription* under AG 930/618–19 that 'the Arabs entered the land'.

<sup>79</sup> The pre-Islamic name for Medina, already mentioned in a cuneiform text from the time of the Babylonian king Nabonidus (556–39 BC).

<sup>80</sup> The corresponding term in Syriac is *ṭayyāyē*; this originally referred just to the tribe of Tayyi' that was found in the Syrian steppe and borderlands of Mesopotamia and then became the generic name in Syriac for all these tribes, and in the Islamic period for Arabs in general. Occasionally Syriac-writing authors use the term *arbāyē*, which I will translate as Arabian in order to distinguish it from *ṭayyāyē*; see n. 158 below.



pillaged and laid waste many lands, committed many massacres of men and burned without compassion or pity.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (613) The Persians subjugate Damascus<sup>81</sup>

Theophanes: The Persians occupied Damascus and took a multitude of captives.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: **Shahrbaraz subjected Damascus to the Persians.** In the following year he (Shahrbaraz) took control of the Galilee and the region of Jordan (*ywrdyn*).

*Chron 1234*: **Shahrbaraz subjected Damascus to the Persians** and the Damascenes agreed to give tribute.

#### (614) The Persians capture Jerusalem<sup>82</sup>

Theophanes: The Persians took the Jordan, Palestine and the Holy City (of Jerusalem) by force of arms and killed many people therein through the agency of the Jews; some say it was 90,000. For the Jews bought the Christians, each man according to his means, and killed them. As for Zacharias, patriarch of Jerusalem, and the holy and life-giving cross, the Persians took them, along with many captives, and carried them off to Persia.

Agapius: The Persians came out from Caesarea and attacked Jerusalem and conquered it.

MSyr: **In year 6<sup>83</sup> of Heraclius, Shahrbaraz attacked Jerusalem, subdued**

81 Theophanes, 300; MSyr 11.1, 403/400; *Chron 1234*, 226. Cf. *Chron 724*, 146 (AG 924/613).

82 Theophanes, 300–301; Agapius, 451 (Heracl 5/614–15); MSyr 11.1, 403–404/400; *Chron 1234*, 226–27. For the date of this event (May 614) see Sebeos, 115, and *Chron Paschale*, 703–5; cf. also Eutychius, 118–19, and *Chron Khuzistan*, 25, 26–27. For discussion see Flusin, *Anastase*, 2.78–79, 129–71; Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et chrétiens', 22–26; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 78–81.

83 Chabot reads year 5, but it is clearly year 6. In either case it is incorrect; it should be year 4 of Heraclius. I give the date here because it is cited by both MSyr and *Chron 1234*, and so most likely goes back to Dionysius.

**it and killed 90,000 persons. The Jews, because of their hatred for them, were buying the Christians from the Persians for a low price and killing them. They (the Persians) captured Zacharias, the Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, and sent him to Persia with the revered wood of the Cross. They also exiled the Jews who had been buying and killing Christians and left no Jews in Jerusalem or its environs.**

*Chron 1234*: **In year 6 of Heraclius and 27 of Khusrau, Shahrbaraz struck against the city of Jerusalem, subdued it by war<sup>84</sup> and killed in it 90,000 Christian persons. The Jews, because of their enmity for them, were buying them for a small price and killing (them). Shahrbaraz captured Zacharias, the Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, and sent him to Persia, to Khusrau, with the revered wood of the crucifixion, and with treasure<sup>85</sup> of gold and silver. He also exiled from Jerusalem the Jews.**

#### (619) The Persians occupy Egypt and Africa<sup>86</sup>

Theophanes: The Persians occupied all of Egypt and Alexandria and Libya as far as Ethiopia and, after taking many captives and immense booty and money, returned home. They were unable to take Chalcedon, so they left a force to besiege it and withdrew.

Agapius: The Persians captured Alexandria and its environs and reached as far as Nubia. They attacked Chalcedon and captured it.

MSyr: **Shahrbaraz entered Egypt and subjected it and also he conquered Alexandria and killed many in it.** He also subjected Libya to the Persians as far as the borders of the Ethiopians.

*Chron 1234*: **Shahrbaraz entered Egypt and subjected it to the Persians, and (he subjected) also Alexandria, and he killed many in it.**

84 *B-harbā* as opposed to *b-meltā* (by agreement/treaty), which corresponds to *polemōi logō* in Theophanes (see nn. 88 and 255 below), but this is likely to reflect the Arabic terms *'anwatan/šulḥan* (Conrad, 'Theophanes', 26–27), for the late Roman terms in Greek were *kata kratos/homologia*.

85 *Qimele'wn*, from Greek *keimēlion*.

86 Theophanes, 301; Agapius, 451 (Heracl 8/617–18); MSyr 11.1, 404/401; *Chron 1234*, 227. For capture of Alexandria see *Chron 724*, 146 (June AG 930/619), and *Chron Khuzistan*, 25–26. See Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 91–92.



### The Persians capture Chalcedon, Ancyra and Rhodes<sup>87</sup>

Theophanes: The Persians marched on Chalcedon and took it by war.<sup>88</sup> | The Persians took by war Ancyra<sup>89</sup> in Galatia.

Agapius: The Persians attacked Rhodes and conquered it. | The Persian commander Shahrbaraz (Shahrbaz) attacked the Romans and besieged Ancyra and took it, killing and enslaving all who were in it. At the end of the year he also captured Rhodes and enslaved its people.

MSyr: The Persians plundered all Syria, Phoenicia, Ancyra, Cappadocia and Palestine; then they seized Galatia and Paphlagonia as far as Chalcedon. | The Persian Shahin besieged Chalcedon and took it by battle. All the people of it he killed in a cruel massacre and returned in peace. | The Persian **Shahrbaraz captured Ancyra** and then captured Rhodes.

*Chron 1234*: **Shahrbaraz captured Ancyra** in Galatia and also many islands in the sea and carried out much killing.

### Khusrau becomes despotic and plunders the churches<sup>90</sup>

Theophanes: Khusrau hardened his yoke on all men by way of bloodthirstiness and taxation; for, being puffed up by his victory, he was no longer able to keep the established order. | Khusrau in his rage sent emissaries

87 Theophanes, 301–2; Agapius, 451 (Heracl 15/624–25) | 458 (Muhammad, year 1/622; NB. for the period *ca.* 620–68 Agapius has parallel notices; see n. 413 below); MSyr 10.XXV, 391–92/379 | 11.I, 404/401 | 11.III, 408/408; *Chron 1234*, 230. For the capture of Chalcedon see Sebeos, 122–23 (conflated with siege of Constantinople of 626); *Chron Paschale*, 706–9 (AD 615); Nicephorus, §6–7; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1.360–61, n. XI. Agapius and Dionysius place the fall of Ancyra in the first year of Muhammad/622. For the capture of Rhodes see *Chron 724*, 147 (AG 934/622–23).

88 *Polemō*; cf. n. 84 above.

89 Modern Ankara in west central Turkey.

90 Theophanes, 302 | 314; Agapius, 451 (Heracl 15) | 458 (Muh 2); MSyr 11.I, 404/401 | 11.III, 408/408; *Chron 1234*, 230. Agapius, 458–60, explains that the reason why Khusrau ordered the conversion of the Chalcedonian Edessans was that the Miaphysite Cyrus, tax-collector of Edessa, was envied by the city's Chalcedonian community and denounced to Khusrau, but Cyrus' relative Jonah, physician to the king, persuaded the latter to compel the Chalcedonian Edessans to become either Miaphysite (Jacobite) or Diaphysite (Nestorian). Dionysius (in MSyr 11.I, 403–404/402–403; *ibid.* 11.III, 408/411; *Chron 1234*, 230) agrees on the first part, but makes the repercussion of the Edessenes' envy of Cyrus that Khusrau stripped the silver from the city's churches.

to confiscate the treasure of all the churches that were under Persian rule. And he forced the Christians to convert to the religion of Nestorius so as to wound the emperor.

Agapius: Khusrau, son of Hormizd, ordered that the marble of the churches which were in all of the cities that he had conquered be taken and be brought to Ctesiphon (Mada'in and Mahuza),<sup>91</sup> something which caused man and beast enormous exertion. | Khusrau, son of Hormizd, acted more harshly towards the peoples in his realm who were of a different religion to him because he was possessed by pride and conceit by reason of the many conquests that he had made and the great extent of his power. He increased their taxes and doubled their contributions. He ordered the destruction of the churches of the Syrias and Mesopotamia and the marble in them to be brought to his kingdom, as we mentioned above, along with the gold and silver vessels and all the wood. | Khusrau oppressed the Melkites of Edessa and forced them to profess the Jacobite faith.

MSyr: Thus the Persians took possession of all the lands of the Romans: Mesopotamia, Syria, Cilicia, Palestine, Egypt and the whole coast. They pillaged and took innumerable captives. They brought into Persia riches, prisoners and all manner of things. They even brought there a good many **marble columns** and altar tables from Romania (Asia Minor), Syria and the other western lands. | Khusrau acted harshly towards the **people** in his realm. The power of speech is not **capable of** recounting the **oppression**, the exaction of **taxes** and tribute, the **enslavement** and **slaughter** that went on at that time, as Khusrau **behaved arrogantly** due to the victory of the Persians.

*Chron 1234*: Khusrau acted harshly and **behaved arrogantly**, puffed up by his triumphs. Who is **capable of** composing lamentations about the **oppression** and **slaughter** that people suffered at this time? How much **enslavement**, depredation, rapacity, cruel extortion and harsh **taxes**? How many stone blocks, stone tables and **marble columns**, decked with silver and gold, were carried away from churches into Persia.<sup>92</sup>

91 See n. 29 above.

92 *Chron 1234* continues with an account of how 'all the silver that adorned the great church of Edessa was removed and sent off to Persia, to the king Khusrau, on account of the enmity that arose between Cyrus, prefect of Edessa, and its citizens'.



**(625–26) The siege of Constantinople by Shahrbaraz<sup>93</sup>**

Theophanes: As for Shahrbaraz, Khusrau dispatched him with his remaining army against Constantinople with a view to establishing an alliance between the western Huns, who are called Avars, and the Bulgars, Slavs and Gepids...

Agapius: Shahrbaraz attacked Constantinople with many Persian troops and besieged it. Then he made an assault on the city, but he did not breach it and left after a long time.

MSyr: **Shahrbaraz and Kardigan** besieged Constantinople and their forces crossed over into Thrace, where some of them besieged it **on the western side**. There was a whole year when the city was in great **straits** and without hope, but suddenly relief appeared **for reasons that will now be explained** (spat between Khusrau and Shahrbaraz; see next but one notice).

*Chron 1234*: Khusrau sent **Shahrbaraz and Kardigan**, the Persian generals, with numerous troops and an arsenal of military equipment and they struck against **Constantinople on the western side** of the city. For nine months the Persians maintained their guard on the city and brought King Heraclius, who was within, into **straits**. But after that the Persians rebelled against their king and made peace with Heraclius **for reasons that will now be explained** (see next but one notice).

**Khusrau orders the deportation of the inhabitants of Edessa to Persia<sup>94</sup>**

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: Khusrau ordered that the people of Edessa be brought down to Persia and he wrote to his governor there about that. The governor was a virtuous, just and kind man; he took his time over the eviction and did not deport them all at one go, but rather began dispatching them one by one. He hoped that some compassion for them would enter the heart of the king and so he concealed their faults. Meanwhile, the Roman king attacked the

<sup>93</sup> Theophanes, 315–16 (using a Byzantine source); Agapius, 458 (Muh 3/624–25); MSyr 11.III, 408/408 (AG 936/624–25); *Chron 1234*, 231 (AG 936). Cf. *Chron Paschale*, 716–17 (indiction 14/625–26), and Sebeos, 122 (conflated with attack on Chalcedon of 615). See Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 370–71, n. XXIV; Flusin, *Anastase*, 1.48–49, 2.83–93; Howard-Johnston, 'Siege'; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 132–41.

<sup>94</sup> Agapius, 460–61; MSyr 11.III, 408/411; *Chron 1234*, 230–31. Cf. Jacob of Edessa, 326.

Persians and came down to Iraq with the result that Khusrau was distracted from the people of Edessa and those who remained escaped enslavement.

MSyr: **Khusrau ordered that the Edessenes be brought down in captivity to Persia and he wrote** that all of them should be sent speedily. **However, the governor** who was there **was a compassionate man**. He decided **not to deport them all at one go, but rather little by little, for he hoped that a pardon would come from the king**. He had sent (the inhabitants of) **one district when the news arrived that Heraclius had entered Persia**. Then the people who remained in Edessa stayed there and did not go down to Persia.<sup>95</sup>

*Chron 1234*: **Khusrau ordered that the Edessenes be brought down in captivity to the land of the Persians and he wrote** to the governor who was in charge of Edessa to do this quickly. **However, the governor was a kind, gentle and compassionate man**. It seemed good to him **not to deport them all at one go and altogether, but rather little by little, for he hoped that a pardon would come from the king**. He had begun to send them **one district at a time when the news was heard that Heraclius had entered Persia**. For this reason Edessa ceased to be sent down into captivity, though two districts had already gone down the Euphrates and reached as far as Saqarta.<sup>96</sup>

**The rift between Shahrbaraz and Khusrau<sup>97</sup>**

Theophanes: Some Persians spoke slanderously to Khusrau concerning Shahrbaraz, namely that the latter was on the side of the Romans and railed at him. So he sent one of his sword-bearers to Chalcedon with an order to Kardigan, Shahrbaraz's fellow-commander, instructing him to kill

<sup>95</sup> Dionysius adds that a certain nobleman of Edessa, Sergius, was among those taken into captivity, son of John of Rusafa, about whom he had told an anecdote earlier on. MSyr also notes that 'it is from this nobleman (*rīshānā*) Sergius that the chronicle of patriarch Dionysius, known as Tellmahraya, derives', by which he presumably intends that Sergius was a source for Dionysius. Since the account of Agapius is extremely close, Sergius must also be a source for him, perhaps indirectly via TC, though it is not impossible that Agapius is using Dionysius.

<sup>96</sup> This is the Syriac form of the Persian Dastagird, a royal estate which lay some 100 km north-east of the Persian capital of Ctesiphon, on the road to Hamadan (ancient Ecbatana), now occupied by the ruins of Eski Baghdad (ca. 80 km north-east of modern Baghdad). See Agnew, 'The Palace of Khosrau II'.

<sup>97</sup> Theophanes, 323–24; Agapius, 461–62 (Muh 7/628–29); MSyr 11.III, 408–9/408–9; *Chron 1234*, 231–33. For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 136–37), which is fuller than, but close to, MSyr. On this incident see Mango, 'Deux études', 105–9, and Howard-Johnston, 'Al-Tabari', 12–14. The incident is also known to Muslim sources (see Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 148–52, and Kaegi and Cobb, 'Heraclius, Shahrbaraz and Tabari').



Shahrbaraz and, taking along the Persian army, to hasten to Persia to assist him. But the messenger who carried the letter was apprehended by the Romans in the area of Galatia. His captors, eluding the Persians, brought him to Byzantium and handed him over to the king's son.<sup>98</sup> When the young king had ascertained the truth from the courier, he straight away sent for Shahrbaraz, who came into the king's presence. The king handed him the letter addressed to Kardigan and showed him the messenger. Shahrbaraz read the letter and, being satisfied of its truth, immediately changed sides and made a covenant with the king's son and the patriarch. He falsified Khusrau's letter by inserting in it the instruction that, along with himself, another 400 governors, commanders, tribunes and centurions should be killed, and he cunningly replaced the seal on it. He then convened his commanders and Kardigan himself and, after reading out the letter, said to Kardigan: 'Are you resolved to do this?' The commanders were filled with anger and renounced Khusrau, and they made a peaceful settlement with the king. After taking common counsel, they decided to depart from Chalcedon and return home without causing any damage.

Agapius: Shahrbaraz had been besieging Constantinople until this time and then he gave allegiance to Heraclius, king of the Romans, and entered into obedience to him. The reason for that was that some people had slandered Shahrbaraz before Khusrau, saying that he was belittling the king and claiming that he had achieved all the conquests himself, that he was attacking the king and scorning him and the rest of the people, and alleging that were it not for him the rule of Khusrau would not endure. Khusrau became angry at that and ordered a letter to be written to the general who was with Shahrbaraz, a man named Mardif,<sup>99</sup> instructing him to find a way to execute Shahrbaraz and send his head to him. And he entrusted him with command of those troops (of Shahrbaraz) and the assault (on Constantinople). As Khusrau's emissary was making for Shahrbaraz's camp he was captured by the Romans, just as he entered their borders. They took him up to King Heraclius, and this was after his return from Persia. Heraclius took the letter and imprisoned the messenger. When he had read it he sent for Shahrbaraz, asking him to come to him and guaranteeing his life,<sup>100</sup> possessions and family and

98 The son of Emperor Heraclius, namely Heraclius Constantine, presumably in charge while his father was on campaign, though Agapius and Dionysius imply the messenger was brought before Emperor Heraclius himself.

99 Presumably this person is to be identified with Kardigan; it could possibly relate to his personal name, for Kardigan, as noted above, is an honorific title (meaning 'black hawk').

100 Literally: 'his hair and his skin'.

informing him that he meant him well. Shahrbaraz came to Constantinople and entered into the presence<sup>101</sup> of King Heraclius. The latter had the letter of Khusrau to the general read out to him and brought the messenger and had him stand before him. Shahrbaraz recognised him and addressed him asking him about the matter and the messenger informed him of the reason. When Shahrbaraz had become fully acquainted with the affair, he swore allegiance to Heraclius. Then he fabricated a letter (as though it came) from the mouth of the king (Khusrau) and dispatched it to Mardif, ordering him to read it to himself and to all the commanders and generals, and he wrote to the general (Mardif) asking if he could imagine himself doing this (i.e. executing Shahrbaraz). The generals and officers were filled with anger and fury against Khusrau; they came to Heraclius, swore allegiance to him and entered into obedience to him. Heraclius commanded that whoever was in their camp be allowed to depart to Persia without any molestation befalling them, and they went away to their lord (Khusrau).

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron* 1234.

*Chron* 1234: The general Shahrbaraz was denounced for insulting the king (Khusrau). He was supposed to have accused him of arrogance and depravity and of hogging the credit for other men's victories. As a result Khusrau sent Kardigan, the other general, written instructions for the arrest and decapitation of Shahrbaraz. The bearer of this missive, together with the escort responsible for his safe arrival, fell into the hands of the Romans on reaching Galatia and was sent as prisoner to King Heraclius. The messenger entered the royal city unnoticed by the Persians, who had it under surveillance. When Heraclius learned from the envoy what he had been sent for and why, he sent a secret summons to Shahrbaraz, assuring him under oath that it was in his own interest to come. Shahrbaraz was accordingly smuggled in and Heraclius showed him what Khusrau had written to Kardigan. The envoy was brought in and made to stand in front of Shahrbaraz, who recognised him immediately. After reading the letter and interrogating the envoy as to certain details, he took his leave of Heraclius and returned to the camp where he pondered what it was expedient for him to do. The scheme which his intelligence devised was both admirable in its cunning and effective in its execution. For the letter he substituted another altered version, adding instructions to the effect that such and such leading Persians of outstanding reputation, 300 in all, should be executed along with Shahrbaraz. Having placed a seal

101 Literally: stepped on to the carpet of.



on this letter to authenticate it, he summoned the leaders of the Persians, including Kardigan, to a meeting. After the letter had been read out aloud to the assembled chiefs, Shahrbaraz asked Kardigan: 'What do you say? Are you prepared to execute this order? What do you say, my lords?' The lords were furious and began to abuse Khusrau and revile his name. Between them they decided to make peace with Heraclius, agreeing to his terms, so that he might be their accomplice in accomplishing the downfall of Khusrau. Their envoys reached a settlement with Heraclius, under the terms of which they gave him hostages as a guarantee of the agreement between them. It was for the king to select his hostages among the sons and the brothers of the Persians; he chose, amongst others, the son of Shahrbaraz. It was agreed that the Persians would strike camp and depart from the city (of Constantinople) and that Heraclius would lead a Roman army to make war on Khusrau. Accordingly the Persians evacuated Europe and returned to Asia.

Cf. *Chron Siirt* LXXXVII, 540–41: It reached Khusrau that Shahrbaraz (Shahriyun) had criticised and scorned him in the presence of his army. The reason for Shahrbaraz's change of heart and disobedience towards Khusrau was that his daughter passed by Ctesiphon (Mada'in), followed by her servants, and Shamta, son of the Christian Yazdin,<sup>102</sup> had insulted her and she had written informing her father of that. He wrote to Khusrau asking him to take revenge on Shamta and to take account of his standing vis-à-vis the Romans, but Khusrau paid no attention to his request and enmity arose between them. Khusrau wrote to a commander called Kardigan that he should plot the death of Shahrbaraz. When the messengers approached Galatia, the Romans seized them and brought them to Heraclius. He investigated what they had with them and wrote to Shahrbaraz to come to him in full safety. He trusted him and came to him and realised what Khusrau had written on his account. He became angry at him and asked Heraclius to put aside the past, sought his protection, and questioned why Heraclius abstained from attacking the Persians and pursuing them. Heraclius said that he had busied himself with that on many occasions and had prepared the army, and then he had seen in a dream Khusrau riding on an elephant and attacking me, striking me and putting me to flight. I, therefore, halted the dispatch of the troops, having pity on them, and left the Persians to invade the provinces of the Romans. Then the commander Kardigan joined with

<sup>102</sup> Yazdin was a senior official in the treasury department of Khusrau II; see Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1.376, n. XXXIII; *Chron Khuzistan*, 29–30, records Shamta's insulting of Shahrbaraz' daughter.

Shahrbaraz in the party of the Roman king after he had made them swear to give him good advice and had given them protection. They resided in the land of the Romans, in a place which he had marked out for them. Then Heraclius began to prepare what they needed to pursue Khusrau, since he had now seen himself in a dream riding an elephant, chasing Khusrau, who was fleeing from him, and knew that God would give him power over him.

**(626–27) The sun was darkened from October to June<sup>103</sup>**

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: There was an eclipse of the sun and it lasted from October until June, that is, for nine months. Half of its disc was eclipsed and the other half not; only a little of its light was visible. | There was an eclipse of the sun and stars were visible in the daytime.

MSyr: **The light of one half of the orb of the sun was extinguished and there was a darkening from October until June so that people said that the orb of the sun would never again be restored.**

*Chron* 1234: **The light of one half of the orb was extinguished and there was a darkening of the sun and the light of one half of its orb was extinguished from October until June so that people said that the orb would never again be restored.**

**Heraclius asks the king of the Khazars for help against Khusrau<sup>104</sup>**

Theophanes: The Khazars broke through the Caspian Gates<sup>105</sup> and invaded Persia, that is, the land of Azerbaijan, under their commander Ziebel, who

<sup>103</sup> Agapius, 452 | 461 (Muh 7/628–29); MSyr 11.III, 409/411; *Chron* 1234, 231. Cf. *Chron* 724, 147 (15 September AG 938/627). All this may have to do with volcanic ash (Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 120).

<sup>104</sup> Theophanes, 316 (using a Byzantine source); Agapius, 462–63; MSyr 11.III, 409/409; *Chron* 1234, 233. On the involvement of the Khazars, a section of the Western Turks, see Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1.199–200; Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses*, 113–15.

<sup>105</sup> Properly, a series of passes in the mountains around the south-east corner of the Caspian Sea, though sometimes confused with the Dariel Pass (also called the Iberian/Caucasian/Alan Gates), on the modern Georgian–Russian border just north of Tiflis (Tbilisi), and with the Darband (Derbent) Pass, on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea on the Russian side of the modern border with Azerbaijan. Probably the Dariel Pass is meant here. See Anderson, 'Alexander at the Caspian Gates'.



was second in rank after the Khagan... After picking 40,000 brave men, Ziebel gave them to the king (Heraclius) as allies while he himself returned to his own land. Taking these men along, the king advanced on Khusrau.

Agapius: Heraclius prepared to attack the Persians and wrote to the Khagan, king of the Khazars, asking him to supply him with 40,000 cavalrymen on the basis that he wed his daughter and so become related to him in marriage. (With these reinforcements) Heraclius went up to the Syrias and began to capture, city by city, what was in the hands of the Persians, appointing his own governors over them.

**MSyr: Heraclius sent word to the Khagan, king of the Khazars, to send him 40,000 soldiers to go and fight the Persian king, Khusrau. The Khagan replied: 'Here are the troops, which will leave by the Caspian Gates, and they will meet you wherever you want.' In return Heraclius promised to give his daughter, Eudokia, as a wife for the Khagan.**

**Chron 1234: Heraclius sent word to the king of the Khazars, to send him 40,000 soldiers from the land of the Caspian to help him. The Khagan sent word to him: 'I am sending them to you and they will meet you at whatever place you wish.' Heraclius promised to give his daughter, Eudokia, as a wife for the Khagan.**

**(627) Heraclius defeats Khusrau's general Rozbihan at Niniveh<sup>106</sup>**

Theophanes: Khusrau collected all his armies and appointed Rozbihan (Razates)<sup>107</sup> commander over them, a most warlike and brave man, whom he sent against Heraclius... On 1 December the king (Heraclius) reached the Great Zab River, which he crossed and encamped near the town of Niniveh... Battle was given on Saturday, 12 December... Rozbihan fell in battle, as did the three divisional commanders of the Persians, nearly all their officers and the greater part of their army... The king celebrated at Dastagird<sup>108</sup> the feast

<sup>106</sup> Theophanes, 317–19 (using a Byzantine source); Agapius, 452 (Heracl 15) | 463–64; MSyr 11.III, 409/409; *Chron 1234*, 233–34. Cf. *Chron Khuzistan*, 27–28. This is the crucial battle of Nineveh which breaks Persian superiority and heralds their rout; see Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 156–71.

<sup>107</sup> More correctly, Roch Vehan; he was sent by Khusrau with 'men selected from the whole kingdom' to stem the advance of Heraclius (Sebeos, 126). He appears in Muslim sources as Rāhẓār (e.g. Tabari, 1.1004).

<sup>108</sup> A Persian royal estate north-east of Ctesiphon; see n. 96 above.

of the Epiphany (in January 628); he gladdened and restored his army while he destroyed the palaces of Khusrau.

Agapius: Heraclius attacked the Persians, captured the city of Khusrau and took a great many prisoners. He left and then made peace with the Persians. | When news reached Khusrau that Shahrbaraz and his men had entered into obedience to Heraclius and that Heraclius was coming to fight him and was faring well and had made many conquests, he was frightened by that and troubled, and he regretted what he had done. All the Persian armies were scattered across the Syrias and Mesopotamia and Heraclius was wiping them out one by one in the course of his (re-)conquest, though the Syrias, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Armenia were still part of the Persian Empire. Then Khusrau ordered a general of his, known as Rozbihan, to take the Persian troops and go out to meet Heraclius, the Roman king. So Rozbihan marched out until he came to the vicinity of Mosul. By this time Heraclius had already conquered Armenia, Mesopotamia, Egypt and the Syrias and killed all the Persian troops who were in these provinces, and most of them (the citizens of these provinces) had sworn allegiance to him, along with most of the Armenians. So Heraclius came with some 300,000 soldiers and 40,000 men came to him from the Khazars. When they arrived in Azerbaijan, Heraclius wrote to them ordering them to remain there until he got to them. When Heraclius had conquered Armenia, he marched until he came to Niniveh and encamped by the Greater Zab River. Rozbihan came to him and the two hosts joined battle. There was intense fighting between them until the Persians were defeated and about 50,000 of them were killed that day, including Rozbihan, the chief of the army. Then Heraclius gave permission for their camp to be plundered. Learning of the death of Rozbihan and his men, Khusrau fled from Ctesiphon (Mahuza and Mada'in). Heraclius arrived and entered it, took possession of the royal treasuries and carried off all that was in it. Then he burned it, laid waste the surrounding villages and enslaved its people.<sup>109</sup>

**MSyr: When Khusrau heard that Shahrbaraz had mutinied and that Heraclius was on his way down to his country, he was despondent and tormented. He mustered as many troops as he was able and he appointed as chief over them Rozbihan and ordered him to engage Heraclius. When the Persians met with the Romans, the Persians were defeated and their leader was killed. When Khusrau heard that his troops were killed,**

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Sebeos, 126–27 (Heraclius 'burned all the royal palaces around the city' of Ctesiphon); Eutychius, 124–25.



he fled from Saqarta<sup>110</sup> and abandoned his riches and his treasures. Heraclius pursued him and entered Ctesiphon (Mahuza) and Saqarta and plundered the riches and he burned Saqarta.

*Chron 1234:* When Khusrau heard that Shahrbaraz and the Persian troops had mutinied against him and that Heraclius had set out on his way down to his country, he was despondent and troubled, for most of the Persian forces were in the western lands, scattered throughout Syria, Palestine and Egypt. He mustered as many troops as he could find and he appointed as chief over them a man called Rozbihan and ordered him to go out and engage Heraclius and do battle with him. Rozbihan set out accordingly and came to Assyria in order to fight with Heraclius. A considerable number of Armenian troops had joined Heraclius from Armenia, and there were Persians and Khazars who had been sent to him by the Khagan. Now they reached the lands of Media,<sup>111</sup> in the region of Azerbaijan, and pillaged them. When Rozbihan heard that Heraclius was approaching, he hastened to engage him at the river in the land of Assyria that is called the Zab. They fought a mighty battle and the Persians took to their heels and many were killed, including the general Rozbihan, and the Romans took control of their camps. When King Khusrau heard that his troops were destroyed, he fled from the Royal City and abandoned his stores and all his treasures. He was then in a palace,<sup>112</sup> namely Saqarta, which he had built two parasangs<sup>113</sup> to the east of Ctesiphon. Heraclius pursued him and entered his palaces and robbed and plundered everything in the royal residences<sup>114</sup> and he burned the palace with fire.

110 Persian Dastagird; see n. 96 above. Tabari, I.1004, who also records this incident, calls it Daskara.

111 The ancient kingdom of Media, corresponding to modern north-west Iran, had its capital at Ecbatana, modern Hamadan.

112 *Hesnē*: the root signifies strength and fortification and is often translated as 'fort', but that is a reflection of the style of architecture and in terms of function 'palace' or 'palatial estate' is here a better translation (in the same way as English/French castle/chateau, despite their military origins, can often designate grand homes).

113 This is an Old Iranian word for a unit of distance, which came to be used widely across the Near East; it is called a farsakh in Arabic. It is approximately equivalent to 3 miles / 5 kilometres. However, Dastagird is much further than two parasangs from Ctesiphon. Theophanes, 320–21, has Armenian defectors from the Persians report to Heraclius that 'Khusrau... is encamped five miles on this side of the palace called Dastagird, in a place called Barasroth'; five miles would be just over two parasangs and so it may be that *Chron 1234* meant Barasroth rather than Ctesiphon.

114 *Apadnē*: from the Persian word *apadāna*, though possibly via the Hebrew *apēden*.

Cf. *Chron Siirt* LXXXVII, 541–42: Khusrau dispatched against Heraclius his general Rozbihan. He encountered Heraclius on the Great Zab and a great battle occurred between them. The Persians were defeated and Rozbihan was killed; they (the Romans) seized what was in his camp. The Romans reached Shahrzur,<sup>115</sup> demolishing fire temples in Beth Garmai<sup>116</sup> and the environs of Niniveh. They came to Dastagird (Daskara), where Khusrau lived. He feared that Heraclius would capture him and so he gave the call in his camp for departure. He left and gave up on gathering together what he had with him. The people left behind their riches and the rest of their possessions. They (the Romans) caught up with him and Khusrau remained in fear, moving from one place to another, the riches cast aside with no one to take them. He arrived at Mada'in and cut the bridges over the Nahrawan<sup>117</sup> to prevent the Romans from crossing it. Heraclius and his army entered Daskara and took all that they desired of what Khusrau had left behind.

(628) Shiroi kills his father and comes to power and makes peace with Heraclius<sup>118</sup>

Theophanes: The king (Heraclius) sent a man back to Shiroi<sup>119</sup> with a message that he should open the prisons and bring out the Romans confined therein, give to them arms, and so move against Khusrau. Shiroi obeyed the king and, after releasing the prisoners, attacked his parricide father. The latter tried to escape, but failed and was captured... Shiroi commanded that he should be killed with bow and arrows and thus in slow pain he gave up his wicked soul. Then Shiroi wrote to the king (Heraclius) to give him the good tidings of the slaying of the foul Khusrau and, after making with him a permanent peace, he handed back to him all the imprisoned Christians and

115 South-east of Sulaymaniyya in northern Iraq; it is the Siarsoura of *Chron Paschale*, 732.

116 An ecclesiastical province of the East Syrian church, occupying roughly the area between the Lesser Zab and Diyala rivers to the north of Baghdad and including the city of Karka d-Beth Sloth (modern Kirkuk).

117 A canal in Iraq, running from Samarra in the north to Kut in the south; see *El*, 'al-Nahrawan'.

118 Theophanes, 326–27 (probably using a Byzantine source); Agapius, 452 | 464–65; Msyr 11.III, 409/409; *Chron 1234*, 234–35. Cf. *Chron Paschale*, 727–29; Jacob of Edessa, 327; *Chron Khuzistan*, 28–29; *Chron Siirt* XCII, 551 (who says that Shiroi became a crypto-Christian); Eutychius, 125–27, 130–31. See Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 174–75.

119 He took the name Kawad on ascending the throne in February 628, becoming Kawad II. The account of his coup against his father and his negotiation of peace with Heraclius is reported in Sebeos, 127–28.



the captives held in every part of Persia together with the patriarch Zacharias and the precious and life-giving cross that had been taken from Jerusalem by Shahrbaraz when he captured Jerusalem.

Agapius: In the year 18 of King Heraclius, Khusrau, son of Hormizd, king of the Persians, was killed, having reigned thirty-eight years. Then Kawad, his son, ruled after him. He made peace with the Romans and restored to them the cities which his father had conquered. | Shiroy, son of Khusrau, was imprisoned after being arrested by his father. He escaped from his confinement and pursued his father. When he caught up with him, he killed him and ruled after him. The reign of Khusrau was thirty-eight years. The reign of his son Shiroy fell in year 7 of Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah, year 18 of Heraclius, which is AG 940 (628–29). Heraclius returned and camped next to a certain village called Thamanin,<sup>120</sup> which is the place where the ark stopped during the flood in the time of Noah. He climbed the mountain called al-Judi,<sup>121</sup> examined the place of the ark and surveyed the world to the four horizons. Then he headed for Amida, where he stayed for the rest of the winter. Shiroy, son of Khusrau, sent an embassy to Heraclius requesting a truce. Heraclius agreed to that on the condition that he hand over to him every city and village of the Romans that his father had conquered and that Heraclius might expel all the Persians in his realm to Persia.

**MSyr: Shiroy, son of Khusrau, had been shut up in gaol by his father, but when he learned of the flight of his father, he escaped, pursued and killed his father, and he ruled after him. Heraclius returned to winter in Assyria. He intended to pursue Khusrau. So Shiroy, once he was king, sent word to inform Heraclius about his killing of his father. He made peace with him on the condition that the Persians would leave the lands of the Romans and go down to their own land.**

**Chron 1234: Shiroy, son of Khusrau, had been shut up in gaol by his father, but when he learned of the flight of his father before Heraclius, he escaped from gaol, pursued and killed his father Khusrau, on 9 February, and he ruled after him. Khusrau had reigned for thirty-eight years. King**

<sup>120</sup> Or Thamanon, as Theophylact Simocatta, 2.10.2, calls it, placing it on the east side of the upper Tigris, just below Lake Van in modern south-east Turkey.

<sup>121</sup> Mentioned also in Qur'an 11.44 as the place where Noah's ark settled; it ultimately derives from Aramaic Qardū or Greek Gordyene. Agapius is our only source for this alleged ascent of Heraclius. Greek sources make clear that Heraclius was encamped in Ganzak in the early spring of 628, which is in modern north-west Iran, near the border with Turkey (Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1.366, n. XVII; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 177–78).

**Heraclius**, after his defeat and plunder of the kingdom of Khusrau, **returned to winter between Assyria and Armenia. He intended to come back to pursue Khusrau**, for he had not yet heard of his assassination by his son. **So Shiroy, once he had accepted the kingship, sent word to inform Heraclius about his killing of his father. He made peace with him on the condition that Heraclius would take all the territories which had formerly belonged to the Romans and the Persians would remain within their previous boundaries and all Persian forces in the west were to be transferred back to Persia.**

#### **Heraclius and Theodore in Syria and Mesopotamia<sup>122</sup>**

Theophanes: The king sent his brother Theodore bearing letters and accompanied by emissaries of Shiroy, king of Persia, with a view to sending back peacefully to Persia those Persians who were at Edessa, in Palestine, Jerusalem and in other Roman towns: they were to cross Roman territory without harm. | When Heraclius had reached Edessa, he restored the church to the Orthodox, for since the days of Khusrau it had been held by the Nestorians.

Agapius:<sup>123</sup> Heraclius resolved to travel to Mesopotamia and the Syrias. He had his brother Theodore go before him and ordered him to allow the Persians throughout Mesopotamia and Syria to leave his realm and return to Persia. So Theodore went off with the vanguard and Heraclius came up (behind him) entering each city in turn, arranging his governors over them, until he had completed his tour of them all and so returned to the rule in Constantinople. As for Theodore, brother of Heraclius, when he reached Edessa, he ordered the Persians who were in it to leave and go to Persia. They refused and said: 'We do not know Shiroy son of Khusrau and we will not leave our country.'<sup>124</sup> He set up catapults, loaded them with stones<sup>125</sup> and

<sup>122</sup> Theophanes, 327 | 328–29; Agapius, 465–67; Msyr 11.III, 409–10/409–10; *Chron 1234*, 235–36. For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 138–40), which is fuller than, but close to, Msyr. Cf. Sebeos, 128. See Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 180, 203–5.

<sup>123</sup> Agapius, 453, relates that Shahrbaraz ordered all the Persians to return to Persia, but they refused; some of them raided in the Euphrates region and Shahrbaraz had to use Roman troops to subdue them (this is misunderstood by Vasiliev, who has Shahrbaraz capture Roman troops).

<sup>124</sup> By this time some of the cities of Mesopotamia had been in Persian hands for over two decades and so some of the younger soldiers might have felt more at home there than in Persia.

<sup>125</sup> The text would seem to have *hamīr* 'donkeys'. Possibly a plural of *jamra* ('pebble, stone') is meant; Vasiliev suggests 'the war machine called *kūdantā*, "mulet", in Syriac'.



fired them at them. He fired some forty missiles at them and killed many of them. They were unable to do anything against him and asked for a guarantee of safety. He granted it and they went out of the city and headed for Persia. Theodore ordered the Jews who were in Edessa to be killed because they had helped the Persians in harming the Christians. When he began killing them, one of them went to Heraclius, informed him what was happening and asked him to forgive them and to look kindly on them. Heraclius agreed to that and wrote a letter to Theodore ordering him to leave them alone and to turn a blind eye to their (past) mistake. When the letter reached him, he held back from them. Then Heraclius came to Edessa and ordered the Christians who were there to return to the Chalcedonian doctrine. They apostatised from the Miaphysite doctrine except for a small group, who remained loyal to the Miaphysite doctrine until this day. Heraclius stayed in Edessa for a whole year and ordered that Cyrus, bishop of Edessa, be banished to the island of Cyprus, because he saw that he was not able to read the Gospels. He said to him: 'My man, how did you become bishop when you do not know how to read the Gospels? Go now to this island, enter it and learn to read (them) and other church matters.'

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron* 1234.

*Chron* 1234: Heraclius marched towards Syria and his brother Theodore<sup>126</sup> went ahead to eject the Persians from the cities as agreed in the earlier pact with Shahrbaraz and as confirmed by the recent treaty with Shiroi. So Theodore began to make the rounds of the Mesopotamian cities, informing the Persian garrisons of their duty to return to their country. In fact they had already been informed of the treaty in letters from Shahrbaraz and from Shiroi. Close on his brother's heels the king advanced, establishing governors and Roman garrisons in the cities. When Theodore reached Edessa, he informed the Persians there about what had happened and about the (imminent) arrival of the king.<sup>127</sup> However, the Persians there turned a deaf ear to his proclamation. Their reply was: 'We do not know Shiroi and we will not surrender the city to the Romans.' The Jews of Edessa were standing there on the wall with the Persians. Partly out of hatred for the Christians, but also in order to ingratiate themselves with the Persians, they began to insult the Romans, and Theodore was obliged to hear their sarcastic taunts against him. This provoked him to an all-out attack on the city, which he

<sup>126</sup> Given as Theodoric (*Twdwryky*) in MSyr and *Chron* 1234.

<sup>127</sup> Palmer accidentally omits the second half of this sentence.

subjected with his catapults to a hail of rocks. The Persian resistance in the city<sup>128</sup> was crushed and they accepted a pledge of safe passage to return to their country. A certain Jew called Joseph, fearing the ruin of his people, scaled down the wall and sped off to find Heraclius in Tella. He was admitted to the royal presence, where he urged the king to forgive his fellow Jews the insults to which they had subjected Theodore and to send an envoy to restrain his brother from exacting vengeance. Meanwhile Theodore had entered Edessa and taken over control. After expelling the Persians and sending them off home, he had sent his men out to herd together the Jews who had insulted him. He had already begun to kill them and to plunder their houses when Joseph arrived with a letter from the king, by which he forbade his brother to harm them. At about the time that Theodore, who had left Edessa and crossed the Euphrates, arrived at Mabbug and set about expelling the Persians from Syria and Phoenicia, King Heraclius arrived in Edessa and took up residence in the palace at the head of the (water) source...<sup>129</sup> Then Heraclius departed from Edessa and crossed the Euphrates to the cities of Syria.

#### (628–32) Civil war in Persia<sup>130</sup>

Theophanes: When Heraclius came to Mabbug, he was informed that Shiroi, king of the Persians, had died and that Ardashir (Adeser), his son, had succeeded to the empire of Persia.<sup>131</sup> After the latter had reigned seven months, Shahrbaraz rose up against him and, having smitten him, ruled over Persia for two months.<sup>132</sup> But the Persians killed him and appointed as queen the daughter of Khusrau, Boran, who ruled the Persian kingdom

<sup>128</sup> Palmer omits the words 'in the city'.

<sup>129</sup> Dionysius gives here a long account about the expulsion of Isaiah, the Miaphysite bishop of Edessa, for refusing communion to Heraclius, about the great families of Edessa, about Heraclius' transfer of cathedral churches in Mesopotamia and Syria to Chalcedonians, and about the coming of the Arabs as punishment for Roman sins.

<sup>130</sup> Theophanes, 329; Agapius, 452 | 453 | 467 | 468/89v; MSyr 11.III, 410/410; *Chron* 1234, 237–38. Cf. *Chron Khuzistan*, 29–30; Jacob of Edessa, 327; Eutychius, 131. See *Elr*, 'Ardašir III', 'Bōrān', 'Hormozd V'.

<sup>131</sup> Tabari, 1.1061–62, says that Shiroi ruled eight months and Ardashir eighteen months; counting from Shiroi's accession in February 628, this puts Shiroi's death/Ardashir's accession in September 628 and Ardashir's death in April 630. Cf. Sebeos, 129–30; *Chron Siirt* XCIII, 555–57, XCIV, 579–80.

<sup>132</sup> Shahrbaraz was allegedly assassinated after only 40 days; Tabari, 1.1063, gives a detailed account of the event and dates it to 9 June 630.



for seven months.<sup>133</sup> She was succeeded by Hormizd, who was driven out by the Saracens,<sup>134</sup> and so the kingdom of Persia has remained under Arab sway until the present time.

Agapius: In year 19 of Heraclius, Kawad, son of Khusrau, died, having reigned one year, and his son Ardashir ruled after him. Then Shahrbaraz, the general who had achieved all these conquests, killed him (Ardashir), made peace with the Romans and restored to them the cities which he and others had captured, as far as Dara, which lies above Nisibis. | In year 21 of Heraclius, Shahrbaraz, who had prevailed over the Persians, died and Boran, his daughter, ruled. She made peace with the Romans and then she died. Her sister then ruled in her place. | Shiroi, son of Khusrau died, and Ardashir ruled after him. Shahrbaraz killed him; this was because, when Khusrau died, Shahrbaraz and the rest of the Persian generals plotted and fled from the camp of Heraclius. They reached Persia with the letter of Shiroi, son of Khusrau, to them. Then Shiroi died and his son Ardashir ruled after him. Shahrbaraz killed him and gathered the Persian troops to himself. Kardigan<sup>135</sup> also gathered numerous troops and the Persians fell into two factions. | The Persian general Shahrbaraz was killed and Boran, daughter of Khusrau, ruled for a few days and then died.

MSyr: **Shiroi the Persian died** having reigned nine months, in the year AG 940. **There ruled** after him, for one year and ten months, **his son, Ardashir. Shahrbaraz killed him and ruled. He confirmed the pact between himself and the Romans.** In the year AG 941 (629–30), 20 of Heraclius and 2 of Abu Bakr<sup>136</sup> **the Persians evacuated Egypt and Palestine** and all the lands of the Romans and they all **went down to Persia.** Now division **broke out among** them (the Persians), **some supporting Shahrbaraz and some Kardigan. Shahrbaraz sent word to Heraclius and he sent troops. Shahrbaraz killed Kardigan and he ruled for one year...**<sup>137</sup> **Then he was**

133 Boran is allotted sixteen months of rule by *Chron Siirt* XCIV, 579 and Tabari, 1.1064, which takes us to around October–November 632.

134 Hormizd would seem to have been just one of a number of persons vying for the Persian throne during the year 632–33; namely Khusrau III, Peroz, Azarmidukht, Hormizd and Yazdgird, each backed by different regional power brokers.

135 Agapius has Mardigan, but presumably this is just a simple copyist's error for Kardigan.

136 For his chronology of this period Msyr uses Jacob of Edessa, who allotted Muhammad only seven years of rule, which might explain why Msyr is already giving the years of Abu Bakr's reign here. Note that *Chron 1234* gives a different synchronisation.

137 Here is given the account of the return of the Holy Cross which I have moved to the next notice, below.

**killed by one of his own relatives** who had been a friend of **Khusrau. There ruled over the Persians** after him **Boran, daughter of Khusrau**, for a few months; **then she died and thereafter her sister Azarmidukht** (ruled).<sup>138</sup> **Within two years** many took up and lost the rule of the Persians: Shahrbaraz, Boran, Khusrau, Peroz, Azarmidukht and Hormizd.

*Chron 1234*: **Shiroi, the king of the Persians, died. There ruled his son,** whose name was **Ardashir.** After he had reigned for a short time **Shahrbaraz killed him and ruled** in his place. **He confirmed the pact** and oaths **between himself and the Romans** and he wrote letters to **the Persians** that **they evacuate Egypt and Palestine** and **go down to Persia.** By the year AG 941 (629–30), 19 of Heraclius and 8 of Muhammad, the last Persian had gone back across the Euphrates. Now war **broke out among** the Persians, **some supporting Shahrbaraz and some Kardigan. Shahrbaraz sent word to Heraclius and he sent Roman troops. Shahrbaraz did battle with Kardigan and killed him** and the kingdom of the Persians ended up with him...<sup>139</sup> **Then he was killed by one of the relatives of Khusrau. There (now) ruled over the Persians Boran, daughter of Khusrau,** for a short time; **then she died and** after her there ruled **her sister Azarmidukht.**<sup>140</sup> **Two years** later commotion struck the Persian people, for some of them wanted to crown Yazdgird, the son of Khusrau, while others were committed to a man named Hormizd. The boy Yazdgird reigned and shared power with his sister Azarmidukht.

#### (630) The return of the Holy Cross from Persia to Jerusalem<sup>141</sup>

Theophanes: Setting forth from the imperial city in the early spring, the king (Heraclius) proceeded to Jerusalem, taking with him the venerable and life-giving Cross so as to offer thanks to God... (he stops off at Tiberias

138 Boran is written Bāram in Msyr and *Chron 1234*, and Azarmidukht as Zrymndwkt.

139 Here is given the account of the return of the Holy Cross which I have moved to the next notice, below.

140 Boran is written Bāram in Msyr and *Chron 1234*, and Azarmidukht as Zrymndwkt.

141 Theophanes, 328; Agapius, 468; Msyr 11.VII, 418/427; *Chron 1234*, 238. Cf. Sebeos, 129–30, 131; *Chron Khuzistan*, 30; *Chron Siirt* XCIII, 556. This was a very triumphal event, a celebration of the victory of Christendom over the Zoroastrian enemy and of Heraclius as its true defender and protector; the ceremony itself probably took place on 21 March 630. See Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 1.384–87, n. XLIII; Mango, 'Deux études', 112–14; Flusin, *Anastase*, 2.293–319; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 201–2, 206–11; and more generally Klein, 'The True Cross', and Baert and Lee, *The True Cross*.



where he converts a Jew who had been oppressing the Christians)...<sup>142</sup> When the king had entered Jerusalem, the patriarch Zacharias having died on his return to Palestine from captivity, and the holy Modestus, archimandrite of the monastery of St. Theodosius, the one who rebuilt the Anastasis and holy Bethlehem – for these had been burned by the Persians – having deputed for him, the king thereupon ordained the holy Modestus patriarch<sup>143</sup> and restored the venerable and life-giving Cross to its proper place.<sup>144</sup> After giving many thanks to God, he drove the Jews out of the Holy City and ordered that they should not have the right to come within three miles of the Holy City.<sup>145</sup>

Agapius: The Persians (in the time of Justinian I) had taken what remained (in Apamea) of the wood of the Cross<sup>146</sup> and removed it to Ctesiphon. Now, in these days, Heraclius asked Shahrbaraz to dispatch it (to him) and he (Shahrbaraz) agreed and expedited it to him. Heraclius took it and conveyed it to Constantinople and joined it to the other remnant (that was stored in Constantinople) and covered it in gold. There it is until the present day.

MSyr: He (a general from Mabbug) **brought back** from Persia **the wood of the Cross**, having received it from Shahrbaraz, and King Heraclius **received it** from him at Mabbug.<sup>147</sup>

*Chron 1234*: Heraclius requested Shahrbaraz to return **the wood of the Cross**, which had been carried off by him when he ravaged Jerusalem in

142 The notice is quite detailed, naming the Jew (Benjamin) and the place where he was baptised ('in the house of Eustathius of Neapolis, a Christian who also received the king'), and may be from the continuator of TC, who would seem to hail from the region of Syria/Palestine. Eutychius, 128, also has Heraclius stop at Tiberias.

143 This is the version of two alternative manuscripts (e and m), which Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 459, say 'is closer to the truth'. The church that Modestus rebuilt at Bethlehem was not the Church of the Nativity, but that of the Shepherds, just outside the town.

144 This momentous event was much celebrated then and later; most recently see Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 206.

145 This exclusion of the Jews from Jerusalem was first enacted by Hadrian after the Bar Kochba revolt and then renewed by Constantine; see Irshai, 'Constantine and the Jews'.

146 Before this Agapius relates the legend of Queen Helena's discovery of two portions of the true Cross in Jerusalem, one of which she deposited at Apamea, the other in Constantinople; the Persians took the portion that had been stored in Apamea. That a fragment of the Cross was kept in Apamea is noted by the sixth-century historians Procopius of Caesarea and Evagrius Scholasticus; see Klein, 'The True Cross', 37–38. Note that Agapius makes no mention of Heraclius taking the Cross to Jerusalem.

147 MSyr gives this information, which he says he has from 'the truthful Mar Dionysius', as part of an account about the raising to life of the child of this general by Saint Severus of Samosata.

the year 6 of Heraclius. And Shahrbaraz **brought back** the wood of the Cross gladly and with great ceremony. When Heraclius was at Mabbug, those bearing the wood came to him and he went out to meet it and **received it** with due solemnity.



## SECTION 2

THE ISLAMIC PERIOD<sup>148</sup>Muhammad (d. 632) and the rise of Islam<sup>149</sup>

Theophanes: Muhammad (Mouamed) died, the leader and false prophet of the Saracens, after appointing his kinsman Abu Bakr (Aboubacharos) to his chieftainship.<sup>150</sup> At the same time his reputation spread abroad and everyone was frightened. At the beginning of his advent the misguided Jews thought he was the messiah who is awaited by them...<sup>151</sup> I consider it necessary to give an account of this man's origin. He was descended from a very widespread tribe, that of Ishmael, son of Abraham...<sup>152</sup> Being destitute and an orphan, the aforesaid Muhammad decided to enter the service of a rich woman who was a relative of his, called Khadija (Chadiga), as a hired worker with a view

148 From this point on the correspondence between Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius is much clearer, except for their respective entries on Muhammad (see next note). For an overview of this period see Stratos, *Seventh Century*, vols. 2–5; Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 133–389; Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*; Whittow, *Orthodox Byzantium*, esp. chs. 3–6; Hawting, *First Dynasty*. Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, surveys the official dealings between the Byzantine and Muslim Arab governments.

149 Theophanes, 333–34; Agapius, 456–57; Msyr 11.II, 404–7/403–5 (AG 933/621–22); *Chron* 1234, 227–30 (AG 933). Msyr makes a few emendations of a polemical nature, more likely added than omitted, so I give the account of *Chron* 1234 (my own translation rather than Palmer's, as I wish to be more exact here). TC's dependants give very different accounts of Muhammad and the rise of Islam, and so it is unclear which of them, if any, is using TC. Rather than leaving out such an important subject, I have chosen to give the accounts of all of TC's dependants so that readers can make their own judgement. Cf. Sebeos, 135; Jacob of Edessa, 326; *Chron Zuqnin*, 149–50; *Chron Siirt* CI, 600–1. *Chron* 819, 11, has a very curious report: 'In the year 932 Muhammad came to power, the first king of the Arabs. He made the first sacrifice and made the Arabs eat it against their custom. From this point begins their reckoning of the years.'

150 The first ruler (caliph) of the Muslims; he reigned AH 11–13/632–34; see *EI*, 'Abu Bakr'.

151 Theophanes recounts how ten Jews followed Muhammad, but then realised he was not the messiah when they saw him eating camel meat; for discussion see my *Seeing Islam*, 505–8.

152 Theophanes gives a summary of the ancestry of the major Arabian tribes, clearly based ultimately on a Muslim source (see Conrad, 'Theophanes', 11–16).

to trading by camel in Egypt and Palestine. Little by little he became bolder and ingratiated himself with that woman, who was a widow, took her as a wife, and gained possession of her camels and her substance. Whenever he came to Palestine he consorted with Jews and Christians and sought from them certain scriptural matters. He was also afflicted with epilepsy. When his wife became aware of this, she was greatly distressed, inasmuch as she, a noblewoman, had married a man such as him, who was not only poor, but also an epileptic. He tried deceitfully to placate her by saying: 'I keep seeing a vision of a certain angel called Gabriel, and being unable to bear his sight I faint and fall down.' Now she had a certain monk living there, a friend of hers, who had been exiled for his depraved doctrine, and she related everything to him, including the angel's name. Wishing to satisfy her, he said to her: 'He has spoken the truth for this is the angel who is sent to all the prophets.' When she had heard the words of the false monk, she was the first to believe in Muhammad and proclaimed to other women of her tribe that he was a prophet. Thus the report spread from women to men, and first to Abu Bakr, whom he left as his successor. This heresy prevailed in the region of Yathrib (Ethribos), in the last resort by war: at first secretly, for ten years, and by war another ten, and openly nine. He taught his subjects that he who kills an enemy or is killed by an enemy goes to paradise; and he said this paradise was one of carnal eating and drinking and intercourse with women, and had a river of wine, honey and milk, and that the intercourse was long-lasting and the pleasure continuous;<sup>153</sup> and other things full of profligacy and stupidity; also that men should feel sympathy for one another and help those who are wronged.<sup>154</sup>

Agapius: The Arabs mobilised at Yathrib. Head of them was a man called Muhammad son of 'Abdallah and he became their chief and king. He governed them for ten years and his family, his relatives and his tribe joined with him. He enjoined them to belief in one God, who has no partner; he rejected worship of idols and singled out God alone for worship. He prescribed for them circumcision, abstention from drinking alcohol and

153 This vision of paradise is also found in Agapius and Dionysius and plausibly goes back to TC.

154 Theophanes' account is very different from that of Agapius and Dionysius, bar the notice on paradise, and is presumably based on some polemical tract written by someone familiar with the Muslim biography of Muhammad. See Conrad, 'Muhammad and the Faith of Islam', who compares Theophanes' account with that in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio* (chs. XIV and XVII), and concludes that the latter is dependent not on Theophanes, but on the same continuation of TC used by Theophanes.



eating pig, carrion or blood, and the practice of prayer and alms-giving. Whoever accepted that was safe and saved; whoever rejected it and desisted from it he fought.<sup>155</sup> He killed notables from among the Arabs of his tribe and others, and he captured many cities belonging to neighbouring peoples. Christians from among the Arabs and other (peoples) came to him and he gave them a guarantee of safety and wrote documents for them (to that effect). All the peoples in opposition to him did likewise, I mean the Jews, Zoroastrians, Sabaeans and others; they gave allegiance to him and took from him a guarantee of safety on the condition that they would pay to him the poll-tax and land tax. He commanded his people to believe in the prophets, the messengers and what God had revealed to them, in the Messiah son of Mary, whom they should say was a messenger of God, His word, His servant and His spirit, in the Gospels, heaven and hell and the Day of Reckoning. He claimed that in heaven there was food, drink, marriage, rivers of wine, milk and honey, and black-eyed women unsullied by man or spirit. He imposed on them fasting, five (daily) prayers and other things which I shall not mention for fear of prolixity.<sup>156</sup>

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron* 1234.

*Chron* 1234: A man by the name of Muhammad, of the tribe of Quraysh, came out in the land of Yathrib and proclaimed himself a prophet.<sup>157</sup> It should be noted that the collective name for all the Arabs is Arabians,<sup>158</sup> so

155 Cf. MSyr: 'Whoever did not accept the teaching of his doctrine, no longer by persuasion but by the sword did he subject them; those who refused, he killed.'

156 Agapius, 457, gives two lists of Muhammad's teachings (see above: 'He enjoined them to belief...' and 'He commanded his people to believe...'), of a quite different nature, and so unlikely to be by the same author. The elements of the second list are all found in much the same order in Dionysius and so is plausibly from TC. For the first list, and for other parts of his account of Muhammad, Agapius would seem to have drawn on his Muslim source, as is suggested by the classical Islamic phraseology of Muhammad's prescriptions (*an yuqīmū al-ṣalāt wa-yūtū al-zakāt... an yu'addū ilayhi al-jizya wa-l-kharāj*). TC does not seem to have drawn upon the Muslim tradition. Conrad, 'Muhammad and the Faith of Islam', states the opposite, citing the material of Muslim origin in Theophanes as proof (see *idem*, 'Theophanes'). However, none of this material is in Dionysius or Agapius and so is almost certainly not from TC; most likely it is from the continuator of TC.

157 This sentence also appears in a Greek historical horoscope of pseudo-Stephen of Alexandria, who Brandes ('Frühe Islam', 338–39) says is using TC.

158 *Ṭayyāyē* derives from the name of the Arab tribe Ṭayyi' (see n. 80 above), which then became applied to all pastoralist tribes in Mesopotamia, and in the Islamic period to all Arabs; *arabāyē* is an old term derived from the Greek word *Arabia*, and so corresponding to Greek *Arabioi*, inhabitants of Arabia (note that it is written with initial *aleph*, and so is to be

called after the general name 'Arabia the Fertile' (Felix), which was their homeland. It extends north-south<sup>159</sup> and west-east from the Red Sea to the gulf of the Persian Sea. They have a great many names by which they call their ancient tribes. Now Muhammad, of whom we are speaking, while in the age and stature of youth, began to go up and down from his town of Yathrib to Palestine for the business of buying and selling.<sup>160</sup> While so engaged in the country, he saw the belief in one God and it was pleasing to his eyes.<sup>161</sup> When he went back down to his tribesmen, he set this belief before them, and he convinced a few and they became his followers. In addition, he would commend the bountifulness of this land of Palestine, saying: 'Because of the belief in one God, the like of this good and fertile land was given to them.' And he would add: 'If you listen to me, God will give to you too a good land flowing with milk and honey.' To corroborate his word, he led a band of them who were obedient to him and began to go up to the land of Palestine plundering, enslaving and pillaging. He returned laden (with booty) and unharmed, and thus he had not fallen short of his promise to them. Since love of possessions impels an act towards a habit, they began going back and forth on raids. When those who had not as yet joined him saw those who had submitted to him acquiring great riches, they were drawn without compulsion into his service. And when, after these (expeditions), his followers had become many men and a great force, he would allow them to raid while he sat in honour at his seat in Yathrib, his city.<sup>162</sup> Once despatched, it was not enough for them to frequent Palestine

distinguished from 'arabāyē, written with initial 'ayn – see n. 250 below). MSyr adds: 'They are also called Ishmaelites and Hagarenes, after Hagar and Ishmael, and Saracens, after Sarah, and Midianites, sons of Qetura. However, although they are distinguished by these names and tribes, the general name of Arabians is given to them all.'

159 MSyr adds: 'from the river Euphrates to the southern sea'.

160 Jacob of Edessa, 326, mentions Muhammad going to Palestine for trade, and his chronicle would presumably have been readily available to TC, a fellow Edessan, who might then have expanded this notice into an account of Muhammad's discovery of monotheism.

161 MSyr has: 'While engaged with the Jews, he learned from them the belief in one God, and seeing that his tribesmen worshipped stones and wood and every created thing, he adhered to the belief of the Jews, which pleased him.' Cf. Theophanes, 334: 'Whenever he came to Palestine, he consorted with Christians and Jews and sought from them certain scriptural matters.'

162 *Chron* 1234 has 'did not allow', but cf. MSyr: 'When many had submitted to him, he no longer went up in person as leader of those going up to raid, rather he would send others at the head of his forces while he would sit in honour at his city.' This is repeated by *Chron Siirt* CI, 601, evidently ultimately reliant upon the same source: 'When Islam became strong, he refrained from going out in person to war and began to despatch his companions.' This correspondence between Dionysius and *Chron Siirt* would provide confirmation of Dionysius'



alone, but they ranged far and wide, killing openly, enslaving, ravaging and plundering. Even this was not enough for them, but they would make them pay tribute and enslave them. Thus, gradually, they grew strong and spread abroad. And they grew so powerful that they subjected almost all the land of the Romans and also the kingdom of the Persians under their sway...<sup>163</sup> They say that there is carnal eating in it (paradise), and copulation with glamorous courtesans, beds of gold to lie upon with mattresses of gold and topaz, and rivers of milk and honey.

{The beginning of the Arab conquests: Theophanes: While the Church at that time was being troubled thus by kings and impious priests, Amalek<sup>164</sup> rose up in the desert, smiting us, the people of Christ. There occurred the first terrible downfall of the Roman army; I mean the bloodshed at Gabitha,<sup>165</sup> Hiermouchas<sup>166</sup> and Dathesmos.<sup>167</sup> After this came the fall of Palestine, Caesarea and Jerusalem, then the Egyptian disaster, followed by the capture of the islands...}.<sup>168</sup>

use of TC's account of Muhammad if it could be shown that *Chron Siirt* had access to TC independently of Dionysius. The Muslim tradition, too, has Muhammad, at the end of his life, sending commanders out on campaigns while he remained in Medina, but these never got beyond the southern tip of Palestine/Arabia (most famously the battle of Mu'ta; e.g. Tabari, 1.1610–18), and most remained in the Arabian peninsula, whereas Theophilus and other non-Muslim sources imply that they ranged much further afield (see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 4, 24–25, 152 n. 7).

163 Dionysius now gives a long account of the key beliefs and laws of Islam which, except for the section on paradise, has nothing in common with that of Theophanes or Agapius.

164 A reference to the biblical people who periodically attacked the Israelites, thus perceived as akin to the Arabs who attack the new chosen people, the Christians.

165 Gabitha (Arabic: Jabiya) is referred to a number of times in Syriac sources as the place where the tribe of Ghassan, major allies of the Byzantines, had its base; it is very near Nawa in modern south-west Syria.

166 Hiermouchas is assumed to refer to the river Yarmuk, by which there occurred a major battle between the Arabs and Byzantines (see the entry thereon below) and which constitutes the western part of the border between modern Jordan and Syria.

167 Dathemon is usually linked with Dathin, which Muslim sources describe as a small village outside Gaza where the first Arab–Byzantine clash occurred (Donner, *Conquests*, 115). However, it is only mentioned by a couple of Muslim sources and is in general an obscure site (unless we link it with ancient Anthedon, Gaza's port; note Eutychius, 131, gives Tādūn), so one should probably distinguish between the two locations; see also next note.

168 Theophanes, 332. This little potted history of the Arab conquests in Theophanes, 332, is copied from a homily of Anastasius of Sinai (d. soon after 700) on the 'Creation of man in the image of God' (*Patrologia Graeca* 89, 1156D). Note that Anastasius actually writes Dathemon, not Dathesmon; this may well intend the Dathema mentioned in 1 Maccabees 9–11, which was near Gabitha and the river Yarmuk. It would seem, then, that what modern scholars have conflated into one battle, the battle of Yarmuk, was actually a series of confrontations that took place in the same area of modern south-west Syria. This would help to explain the confusion

{The battle of Mu'ta:<sup>169</sup> Theophanes: Muhammad, who had died earlier, had appointed four emirs<sup>170</sup> to fight those members of the Arab nation who were Christian, and they came in front of a village called Moucheon,<sup>171</sup> in which was stationed the *vicarius* Theodore,<sup>172</sup> intending to fall upon the Arabs on the day when they sacrificed to their idols.<sup>173</sup> The *vicarius*, on learning this from a certain man of Quraysh called Koutabas,<sup>174</sup> who was in his pay, gathered all the soldiers of the desert guard and, after ascertaining from the Saracen<sup>175</sup> the day and hour when they were intending to attack, himself attacked them at a village called Mothous<sup>176</sup> and killed three emirs and the bulk of their army. One emir, called Khalid (Chaled), whom they call God's Sword, escaped. Now some of the neighbouring Arabs were receiving small payments from the kings for guarding the approaches to the desert. At

over the date and location of this battle (see the entry thereon below). See Donner, *Conquests*, 128–32; Kaegi, *Conquests*, 88–94.

169 The death of three emirs and the presence of Khalid (ibn al-Walid), characterised as the 'Sword of God', is also a feature of the Muslim accounts of the battle of Mu'ta (Donner, *Conquests*, 103, 105–10; Kaegi, *Conquests*, 71–74), though they do not mention the *vicarius* Theodore, just an unnamed patrician. Sebeos, 135, describes a battle between the Arabs and Byzantines at Rabbath Moab (Areopolis, modern Rabba, near Kerak in modern south Jordan), which is very near Mu'ta and was a substantial city. But Sebeos' account concerns Theodore, brother of Heraclius, not the *vicarius* Theodore (though it would be easy enough to confuse the two given the homonymy), and the Arabs are the victors, not the Byzantines. See Conrad, 'Theophanes', 21–26.

170 I use emir in this book to translate Greek *amēras* and Syriac *amīrā*, which come from Arabic *amīr*. It means leader, whether military (i.e. general or commander) or civilian (i.e. governor) or both.

171 Unidentified; Conrad, 'Theophanes', 23, suggests modern al-Mihna, on a hill overlooking Mu'ta.

172 The *vicarius* acted as an intermediary between the military and civilian heads of a province (*ODB*, 'vicarius'); he features in Muslim sources as *al-fiqār* (e.g. Tabari, 1.2087–88).

173 Though grammatically it is ambiguous who is meant by this, the implication is surely that it is the 'idolatrious sacrifice' of the Christian Arabs (though Theophanes probably assumed it intended that of the Muslim Arabs). Many of the Christian Arabs were Miaphysite, so this suggests a Chalcedonian origin for this notice.

174 Perhaps Qutayba; Muslim sources mention a Qutba ibn Qatada, of the tribe of 'Udhra, but he fights alongside the Muslims (e.g. Tabari, 1.1614, 1617). Quraysh, rendered in Greek here as *Korasēnos*, is the tribe of the prophet Muhammad and of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs.

175 Throughout the rest of his chronicle Theophanes sometimes uses the term Arab and sometimes the term Saracen to refer to those whom we would call Arabs, without any apparent consistency.

176 Usually identified with Mu'ta, which lies at the southern end of the Dead Sea in modern south Jordan. It is presumably the same as Stephen of Byzantium's Mōthō and the *Notitia Dignitatum*'s Motha (full references and discussion given in Conrad, 'Theophanes', 23).



that time a certain eunuch arrived to distribute the wages of the soldiers, and when the Arabs came to receive their wages according to custom, the eunuch drove them away, saying: 'The king can barely pay his soldiers their wages, much less these dogs.' Distressed by this, the Arabs went over to their fellow tribesmen, and it was they that led them to the rich country of Gaza, which is the gateway to the desert in the direction of Sinai}.<sup>177</sup>

#### (633–34) The dispatching of Arab generals<sup>178</sup>

Theophanes: Abu Bakr<sup>179</sup> sent four generals who were conducted, as I said earlier, by the Arabs, and so they came and took Hera<sup>180</sup> and the whole territory of Gaza.

Agapius: He (Abu Bakr) sent the troops to the horizons with four men: one to the land of the Persians and the others to Aleppo and Damascus. | Abu Bakr sent four generals with the armies, one to Palestine, another to Egypt, a third to the Persians, and a fourth to the Christian Arabs.

MSyr: **After Muhammad died, Abu Bakr** succeeded him and **he dispatched four generals**: one to **Palestine**, another to **Egypt**, the third to **Persia** and the fourth against the **Christian Arabs**; all returned victorious.

<sup>177</sup> Theophanes, 335–36. This notice is usually assumed to be from TC, but since it is only in Theophanes this is not very likely. It is an amalgam of different materials: two Greek reports, one about the battle at Mu'ta and one about Arab border guards. The former has been combined by Theophanes, or by his source, with a Muslim account about the battle of Mu'ta (see n. 169 above). Possibly the Greek and the Muslim accounts about Mu'ta concern different events, for in Muslim sources the battle of Mu'ta occurred in AH 8/629, when Muhammad was still alive, whereas this notice is placed by Theophanes after Muhammad's death.

<sup>178</sup> Theophanes, 336; Agapius, 453 | 468; MSyr 11.IV, 411/413; *Chron 1234*, 239–41. Cf. Eutychius, 131. Most Muslim sources date Abu Bakr's despatch of the generals to early AH 13/March–April 634 (Donner, *Conquests*, 124), though some suggest the process began already in AH 12/633–34 (e.g. Ibn Khayyat, 85), which would fit better with the notice in *Chron 724* cited in n. 182 below. The 'four generals' theme belongs, in any case, to a later phase of systematisation (Baladhuri, 107, only has three). It could be of Christian origin; the late seventh-century apocalypse of pseudo-Methodios talks of 'four chiefs of chastisement' (Martinez, 'Apocalyptic', 78), mirroring the 'four tyrants, sons of Muni the Arab woman' (*ibid.*, 65) who feature in the biblical Ishmaelite–Midianite eruption, though 'four' is of course an obviously symbolic number.

<sup>179</sup> The first caliph of the Muslims; he reigned AH 11–13/632–34; see *El*, 'Abu Bakr'; Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, 28–56.

<sup>180</sup> *Tēn Hēran*: this has been variously explained as a reference to the Lakhmid capital al-Hira in Iraq, the Sinai town of Pharan (Mayerson, 'First Muslim Attacks') and the Arabic term for camp (*hīra*); the latter is argued by Conrad, 'Kai elabon tēn Hēran' and is perhaps the most plausible.

*Chron 1234*: **After Muhammad died, Abu Bakr** became king and in the first year of his reign **he dispatched** troops of Arabs to the land of Syria, to conquer it, some 30,000 soldiers. He appointed over them **four generals**...<sup>181</sup> Of the four generals sent out by Abu Bakr one came, as we have said, to the land of Moab en route for **Palestine**, the second headed for **Egypt** and Alexandria, the third went to the **Persians**, and the last to the **Christian Arabs** who were subject to the Romans.

#### (634) The battle of the patrician Sergius against the Arabs<sup>182</sup>

Theophanes: Sergius arrived with some difficulty with a few soldiers from Caesarea in Palestine. He gave battle and was the first to be killed along with his soldiers, who were 300. Taking many captives and much booty the Arabs returned home after their brilliant victory.

Agapius: A patrician of the Romans called Sergius resided at Caesarea as the governor over it on behalf of the Romans. He engaged them (the Arabs) and they defeated him and killed his troops. | As for the one (general) sent to Palestine, (he encountered) a patrician of the Romans called Sergius. He killed him and all his troops and plundered their camp. The other three were also successful and returned to Yathrib.

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron 1234*.

*Chron 1234*: The opposite number of the (Arab) general sent with Arab troops to Palestine was the patrician Sergius, to whom Heraclius had committed Palestinian Caesarea and its region. When he learned of the Arab army's

<sup>181</sup> *Chron 1234* here uses Muslim sources to give extra data, such as the names of the generals and Abu Bakr's speech to the departing troops. See my 'Arabic, Syriac and Greek Historiography'.

<sup>182</sup> Theophanes, 336; Agapius, 454 | 468–69; MSyr 11.IV, 411–12/413; *Chron 1234*, 241–42. For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 146–47), which is fuller than, but close to, MSyr. This battle is often equated with that recorded by *Chron 724*, 147–48: 'In the year 945, indiction 7, on Friday 4 February (634) at the 9<sup>th</sup> hour, there was a battle between the Romans and the Arabs of Muhammad in Palestine twelve miles east of Gaza. The Romans fled, leaving behind the patrician *bryrēn*, whom the Arabs killed. Some 4000 poor villagers of Palestine were killed there, Christians, Jews and Samaritans. The Arabs ravaged the whole region.' This in turn is usually identified with the battle of Dathin found in Muslim sources (see n. 167 above). Other scholars equate one or other or both with the battle of Ajnadayn, which Muslim sources say occurred 'between Ramla and Bayt Jibrin (Eleutheropolis)' in Jumada I AH 13 (July 634) and in the course of which a cubicularius (*qbql'r*) was killed (Ibn Khayyat, 87). See Donner, *Conquests*, 128–32, 139–41; Kaegi, *Conquests*, 88–98.



approach he assembled the forces that happened to be with him and sent for 5000 Samaritan foot-soldiers to strengthen his arm in the coming encounter with the Arabs. When the Arabs heard about these preparations they concentrated their forces and laid an ambush by which to surprise and destroy the Romans. Already the Romans were on the march and had reached the place where the ambush had been laid. Unaware, as yet, of the presence of the Arabs, they requested permission from Sergius to rest a little and to lay down their burdens, for most of them were foot-soldiers. The patrician refused. He knew by this time that the enemy were close at hand. He ordered the trumpets to be sounded and the drums to be beaten. The Romans were just preparing to charge when the Arabs, mightily armed, sprang out of their hiding-places and advanced on them with deafening, angry shouts. The first ranks to meet their onslaught were those of the Samaritans, for these had marched at the head of the column. Under the attack they collapsed and every one of them perished by the sword. The patrician saw this and began to flee headlong to save his skin. The Arabs pursued the Romans, like harvesters scything a ripe field of corn. Sergius fell from his horse, but his attendants came to his aid and set him back on again. He stayed briefly in the saddle and then fell again. Once more his companions held ranks and set him back on his mount. A few steps further he fell to the ground for the third time. They were making as if to put him back in the saddle when he said: 'Leave me! Save yourselves! Otherwise you and I shall drink the cup of death together.' So they left him behind and indeed they had not gone far before the pursuing Arabs swooped in on him and killed him on the spot. They continued their chase and slaughter of the Romans until darkness fell. A few got away hiding in trees, behind stone walls and in vineyards, and finally entered Caesarea.<sup>183</sup>

#### An earthquake and a sign in the heavens<sup>184</sup>

Theophanes: An earthquake occurred in Palestine and there appeared a sign in the heavens, called a comet, in the direction of the south foreboding the Arab conquest. It remained for thirty days, moving from south to north and was sword-shaped.

183 Palmer, WSC, 147, has 'the Arabs entered Caesarea', but it is clearly the fleeing Romans who are the subject; Msyr says 'they made known (the defeat) in Caesarea'.

184 Theophanes, 336; Agapius, 454 | 469 (Abu Bakr, year 3/634–35); Msyr 11.IV, 413/414. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 150 (sign in sky presaging Arab conquests). Msyr dates the earthquake to September AG 945/634 and the comet immediately after it. Only Agapius, 469, and Msyr 11.V, 414/419, mention the plague.

Agapius: There was a mighty earthquake in this year and there appeared in the sky a sign, a column of fire, and it began moving from the east to the west and from the north to the south then disappeared. | There was a mighty earthquake in Palestine and for thirty days the earth shook and there was a major plague in various places.

MSyr: There was a violent earthquake in the month of September and afterwards a portent in the sky, resembling a sword stretched out from the south to the north. It stayed there for thirty days and it seemed to many that it stood for the coming of the Arabs.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

Cf. *Chron Siirt* XCIV, 580: There appeared in the sky something like a lance from south to north and then it extended from east to west, and it remained thus for 35 nights; people saw it as a portent of Arab rule.

[**Forced conversion of Jews:** MSyr: At this time King Heraclius ordered that all the Jews who were found in the lands of the Roman Empire should be baptised and become Christians. For this reason the Jews fled Roman territory. They came first to Edessa; expelled violently once again from this place, they fled into Persia. A great number of them received baptism and became Christians.]<sup>185</sup>

#### The death of Abu Bakr and 'Umar's accession and capture of the Balqa'<sup>186</sup>

Theophanes: Abu Bakr died after being emir for two and a half years and 'Umar<sup>187</sup> (Oumaros) succeeded to the power. He sent an expedition against

185 This is only in Msyr 11.IV, 413/414; it perhaps comes from Sergius of Rusafa, but was omitted by TC as it shows Heraclius in a bad light. Heraclius' decree against the Jews appears in a number of sources in connection with his prediction/dream about the Roman Empire being overrun by a circumcised people: see my *Seeing Islam*, 218, re Fredegar, 153; cf. *Chron Siirt* CI, 600; Eutychius, 129 (re Palestinian Jews); Sebeos, 134 (re Edessan Jews). On the forcible conversion of Jews at this time see Dagron and Déroche, 'Juifs et chrétiens', 28–38.

186 Theophanes, 336–37; Agapius, 469; Msyr 11.V, 414/417 (AG 946/634–35); *Chron 1234*, 245. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 149 (Jumada II 13 AH/August 634: Abu Bakr's death). In the reconstruction of Ibn Ishaq and Waqidi, Bostra was the first city to be captured by the Arabs (Donner, *Conquests*, 129); other Muslim historians say Ma'ab (Kaegi, *Conquests*, 83–87), though Tabari, 1.2108, says this was only a tribal encampment.

187 The second caliph of the Muslims; he reigned AH 13–23/634–44; see EI, 'Umar I b. al-Khattab'; Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, 57–77; Numani, *Umar*.



(the province of) Arabia and took the city of Bostra as well as other cities and they advanced as far as Gabitha.<sup>188</sup>

Agapius: Abu Bakr died and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ruled after him for twelve years (beginning) in the year AG 946 and year 13 of the Arabs (634–35). In the first year of his reign 'Umar sent troops to the Balqa'.<sup>189</sup> They conquered Bostra and many cities and forts and then they returned to Yathrib.

MSyr: **Abu Bakr died having reigned for two years. After him 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ruled and he sent a military force<sup>190</sup> to Arabia; they took Bostra and destroyed other cities.**

*Chron 1234*: **Abu Bakr, their king, died having reigned for two years and a half. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ruled and he sent a military force to Arabia, which is called Balqa'; they took Bostra and destroyed the rest of the villages and cities.**

#### **The battle of Theodore brother of Heraclius against the Arabs<sup>191</sup>**

Theophanes: Theodore, the brother of King Heraclius, engaged them (the Arabs), but was defeated and came to the king at Edessa.

Agapius: Heraclius sent his brother, who was in Edessa, against the Arabs, but he was scared of them. Khalid ibn al-Walid was dispatched with many troops to the Balqa' and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (see below) was sent off to the Persians. As for Khalid, he engaged with Theodore, the brother of Heraclius,

188 Arabic: Jabiya; see n. 165 above.

189 The Balqa' was a district of the Muslim province of Damascus, approximately corresponding to modern north and central west Jordan; its capital was 'Amman.

190 Instead of the usual word for army/troops, *ḥaylā/haylawātē*, Dionysius uses *gaysā*, from the Arabic word for army, *jaysh*. This Arabic word had already entered Syriac before Islam (see Segal, 'Arabs', 100–1, 104).

191 Theophanes, 337; Agapius, 454|469 ('Umar 2/635–36); MSyr 11.V, 414–15/418; *Chron 1234*, 242–44. For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 147–49), which is fuller than, but close to, MSyr; the anecdote about the stylite is presumably to be attributed to Dionysius, a Miaphysite, rather than to Theophilus of Edessa, a Chalcedonian. Sebeos, 135, mentions an encounter between Theodore and the Arabs, but it is unclear whether this is the same battle or whether Sebeos has conflated two battles, both involving Heraclius' brother Theodore, one occurring east of the Dead Sea – see the entry on the Battle of Mu'ta above – and the other the engagement narrated here, perhaps occurring in the region of Damascus–Hims. Cf. Nicephorus §20; *Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §12. See Kaegi, *Conquests*, 98–100.

and Khalid defeated him, killed the Roman troops and plundered them. Theodore fled to Constantinople.

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron 1234*.

*Chron 1234*: When King Heraclius heard of the death of the patrician Sergius and of the defeat of the combined forces of the Romans and the Samaritans, he gave his brother Theodore orders to muster all the Romans who were with him in Mesopotamia and all those on the west side of the Euphrates. With all present and ready and the army at full strength they marched off, swaggering with unbounded arrogance and conceit, trusting in their large numbers and the splendour of their weaponry. Every tent in the camp became a place of dancing, rejoicing, drinking and song. They thrust out their lips and shook their heads,<sup>192</sup> saying: 'We won't give those Arabs a second thought; they are no more than dead dogs.' When they reached the village of Gousiya in the region of Hims, Theodore approached a stylite standing on his pillar, a Chalcedonian. At the end of the long conversation which ensued between them, the stylite said to Theodore: 'If you will only promise that on your safe and victorious return from the war you will wipe out the followers of Severus<sup>193</sup> and crush them with excruciating punishments...',<sup>194</sup> to which the patrician Theodore replied: 'I had already decided to persecute the Severans without being instructed by you.' These words were overheard by an Orthodox (i.e. Miaphysite) soldier standing near by; though he smarted with indignation, respect for superior rank prevented him from speaking. So the Romans, puffed up with conceit, left that place and approached the Arab positions. They pitched camp near the tents of the Arabs and from May until October the two armies were encamped side by side, threatening one another. Then, suddenly, they were ranged in opposing battle-lines. For the first hour it seemed that the Romans would be stronger, but then the Arabs turned on them and the Romans faltered. In that moment the spirit went out of them and they lost their nerve, turned tail and took to flight. Even so they could not escape alive because divine providence had abandoned them. They were trampled underfoot by their enemies, who put them all to the

192 Conveying mockery; it is an allusion to Psalms 22:7: 'All they that see me laugh to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head' (King James version).

193 A reference to Severus, patriarch of Antioch (512–18), who championed the idea of one nature in Christ (Monophysitism) against the imperial Chalcedonian position of two natures. MSyr has: 'followers of Jacob', that is, Jacob Baradeus, bishop of Edessa (543–78) and a leading Miaphysite authority.

194 Then 'your victory will be sure' is the implied conclusion of the sentence.



sword. No one was able to save himself except for Theodore, who escaped with a handful of men. That soldier, who was a believer,<sup>195</sup> saw Theodore on the point of losing consciousness, his eyes staring out into impenetrable darkness, and he found the courage to say to him: 'Well Theodore, what has become of your stylite and his promises? This is a fine achievement to add to your successes. Will you bring the news of the victory to the king?' The patrician took this in but did not even answer back. So the whole Roman army was destroyed while Theodore himself got away to the king. The Arabs switched their attention to the fortified camp of the Romans and secured for themselves more gold, silver, expensive clothing, slaves and slave-girls than they could count.

{ **The subjection of Hims:** *Chron* 1234: Khalid ibn al-Walid set out with an Arab army from Damascus for Jordan, the Balqa' and the land of Hawran. The Arabs wanted to take captives and to loot, but Abu 'Ubayda, at the command of King 'Umar, prevented them and made the people tributaries instead. From there they went to Baalbek, Palmyra and Hims. The Himsis shut the gates against them and went up on the wall above the Rastan (north) gate, outside which the Arabs were encamped, to parley with them. Their proposal to the Arabs was this: 'Go and engage the king of the Romans in battle. When you have defeated him, we will be your subjects. If you do not, we will not open the gates to you.' When the Arabs began to attack the city regardless, the Himsis expected reinforcements to come and rescue them, but none came. Then they lost their will to fight and sued for peace. They asked the Arabs for an agreement, a pact and oaths. They received, like Damascus, a written covenant granting them security for their lives, possessions, churches and laws and requiring them to pay 110,000 gold coins as the tribute of the city. So the Arabs gained control of Hims. The emir who was put in charge of collecting the tribute for them was Habib ibn Maslama. As for the Palestinians and the inhabitants of the coastal settlements, they all congregated within the walls of Jerusalem. }<sup>196</sup>

195 I.e. Miaphysite; this is the Miaphysite patriarch Dionysius giving his opinion here, not TC.

196 *Chron* 1234, 248–49. This notice is not in any of the other dependants of TC and would seem to derive from Muslim sources except, perhaps, for the last sentence. I give it here as an example of *Chron* 1234's use of such sources, which is clear also in its account of the Muslim capture of Damascus (see my 'Arabic, Syriac and Greek Historiography'). None of these notices of overtly Muslim historical content is in Msyr, and so they are likely to go back to Dionysius, but more plausibly were added to *Chron* 1234 at a later date.

(635–36)<sup>197</sup> **The battles of Baanes and Theodore the Sacellarius against the Arabs**

(a) An Arab–Roman encounter near Hims; the Roman army marches to Damascus.<sup>198</sup>

Theophanes: The king appointed another commander called Baanes<sup>199</sup> and sent Theodore the Sacellarius<sup>200</sup> at the head of a Roman army against the Arabs. When he came to Hims (Emesa), he met a multitude of Saracens, whom he slew together with their emir and drove the rest as far as Damascus; and he encamped there by the river Bardan...<sup>201</sup> Heraclius diverted Baanes and Theodore the Sacellarius from Damascus to Hims at the head of an army of 40,000 and they pursued the Arabs from Hims to Damascus.

Agapius: Heraclius went down to the Syrias and sent troops to (fight) the Arabs, but they defeated them and plundered their camp. | Heraclius arose and went out to Mabbug and he dispatched to Khalid a patrician, who engaged him and inflicted defeat on Khalid. Some 5000 men were killed from among the Arabs. He (Khalid) returned to Damascus.

MSyr: The **general Baanes and the son of Shahrbaraz** the Persian **mustered troops** and came **towards Damascus in order to guard** this land. The king of the Arabs came out to meet them and killed a considerable

197 Theophanes and Msyr place these battles in two separate years, but in general the accounts of these battles in all of TC's dependants are terribly confused, perhaps because, as noted in n. 168 above, there were a number of skirmishes rather than one or two decisive contests. The date of the final Roman defeat, in the summer of 636, seems more certain. See Donner, *Conquests*, 128–48.

198 Theophanes, 337; Agapius, 454 | 469–70/90a; Msyr 11.VI, 415–16/420; *Chron* 1234, 244. Theophanes and Agapius appear to agree on a Roman victory, possibly near Hims; cf. *Fragment on the Arab Conquests*, lines 14–16, which seems to speak of a victory for (Theodore) Sacellarius.

199 Nīchānīan, 'Le maître des milices d'Orient, Vahan', identifies him with the general Vahan Khorkhoruni mentioned by Sebeos, 133, as participant in a coup against Heraclius in favour of the latter's bastard son Athalric. Ibn Khayyat, 100 (AH 15/636), says that Baanes was a Persian noble who converted to Christianity and went over to the Byzantines, though he might be confusing him with Shahrbaraz; see Gil, *History of Palestine*, 34 and n. 33 thereto.

200 Greek: *Sakellarios*; an official entrusted with administrative and financial duties (cf. *sakellē* or *sakellion*, 'purse, treasury'). His role in these battles is also noted by *Chron Khuzistan*, 37.

201 Theophanes interpolates the notice about Heraclius bidding farewell to Syria here (see the notice thereon below).



number of them.<sup>202</sup> Arriving at Damascus, they camped by the river Pharpar, which the Arabs call Bardan.<sup>203</sup>

*Chron 1234*: Heraclius dispatched the **general Baanes and the son of Shahrbaraz**, who had served as a soldier with the king of the Romans since his father's assassination, with the Sacellarius, the patrician of Edessa, and they **mustered numerous troops** and set off marching **towards Damascus in order to guard** the cities lest the Arabs enter them. On reaching Hims they encountered the Arab emir Khalid ibn al-Walid. The Romans were routed by the Arabs and many of them were massacred, the number of the slain amounting to 40,000; Baanes and the Sacellarius were killed while the son of Shahrbaraz escaped with his life and submitted to the Arabs.<sup>204</sup>

Cf. *Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §15: Heraclius sent forth (messengers) throughout all the provinces and islands of his realm (instructing) that however many Roman legions were stationed in various places in defence of the lands they should make their way to Damascus, the capital of Syria, to fight off the enemy.

(b) The battle of Yarmuk:<sup>205</sup>

202 This sentence seems to refer to the next year's Arab victory, which is confirmed by the corresponding notice in *Chron 1234* mentioning 40,000 Roman dead, the same number as Theophanes gives in his notice for the battle of Yarmuk in his entry for the next year, and the death of Baanes and the son of Shahrbaraz, which only occurred in the course of the final Roman defeat by the river Yarmuk. Note that Msyr states that it was the king (*malkā*) of the Arabs who came out to fight the Romans.

203 The river Pharpar is mentioned in 2 Kings 5:12 as one of the two rivers of Damascus, along with the Abana. The latter is normally identified with the modern river Barada, and the former with the A'waj (its valley being called the Wadi 'Ajam), one tributary of which is called the wadi Barbar.

204 As with Msyr (see previous note but one), this sentence must refer to the next year's Arab victory. Note that *Chron 1234*, 244–45 and 248, goes on to give an account of the Arab siege of Damascus that is clearly dependent on Muslim sources.

205 Theophanes, 337–38; Agapius, 453 | 470 ('Umar 3/636–37); Msyr 11.VI, 416/420–21; *Chron 1234*, 244 | 249–51. Cf. *Chron 819*, 11 (AG 947: 'The Romans and the Arabs did battle on the river Yarmuk and the Romans were totally defeated'); Eutychius, 135–36; Fredegar, 153–54. *Fragment on the Arab Conquests*, line 20, gives 20 August AG 947/636 as the date of a battle at Gabitha; since this is close to dates given by many Muslim sources for the battle of Yarmuk (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 180, and Ibn Khayyat, 100: Rajab AH 15/August 636) and since Msyr states that Gabitha was on the river Yarmuk, it is assumed that Christian and Muslim sources are recording the same battle. Muslim sources mostly place the capture of Damascus some time in autumn AH 14/635, but say that the Arabs evacuated it upon the approach of the Byzantines in 636 and then reclaimed it after the latter's defeat at Yarmuk (Donner, *Conquests*, 131–32, 137; Scheiner, 'Eroberung von Damaskus').

Theophanes: In this year an enormous multitude of Saracens, setting out from Arabia, made an expedition to the region of Damascus. When Baanes had learned of this, he sent a message to the imperial Sacellarius, asking the latter to come with his army to his aid, seeing that the Arabs were very numerous. So the Sacellarius joined Baanes and, setting forth from Hims, they met the Arabs. Battle was given and, on the first day, which was a Tuesday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month of July,<sup>206</sup> the men of the Sacellarius were defeated. Now the soldiers of Baanes rebelled and proclaimed Baanes king while they abjured Heraclius. Then the men of the Sacellarius withdrew and the Saracens, seizing this opportunity, joined battle. And as a south wind was blowing in the direction of the Romans, they could not face the enemy on account of the dust and were defeated. Casting themselves into the straits of the river Yarmuk (Hiermouchas), they all perished, the army of both generals numbering 40,000. Having won this brilliant victory, the Saracens came to Damascus and captured it, as well as the country of Phoenicia and they settled there.<sup>207</sup>

Agapius: The Romans engaged the Arabs by the (river) Yarmuk and the Arabs killed so many Romans that they (i.e. their corpses) formed a bridge that one could walk on and that was in AG 943 (631–32).<sup>208</sup> The Arabs marched out from Damascus with Khalid ibn al-Walid. The patrician of the Romans was at Antioch when he heard that Khalid was on the move with the Arab troops.<sup>209</sup> Fear and anxiety came over him and he assembled many troops and he headed for Damascus with 70,000 warriors. Then Khalid turned back to Damascus and took it by peace agreement.<sup>210</sup> He marched against the other cities of Syria and captured them by peace agreement.

MSyr: The Romans of Arabia fought the Arabians of Arabia in the (place in

206 This synchronisation is correct for 636; ie. 23 July 636 was indeed a Tuesday.

207 Cf. Nicephorus, §20: 'Heraclius appointed as commander of the eastern forces Theodore surnamed Trithyrios, the imperial treasurer... He joined battle with the Saracens at a place called Gabitha. But they, having set ambushes beforehand and skirmished with a few men, advanced on the Romans. The ambushing men fell suddenly on the latter and, having surrounded them, slew many soldiers and officers.'

208 This is probably a copyist's mistake for AG 948/636–37.

209 Ibn al-'Adim, 10.4338, has Baanes set out from Antioch to march to Damascus to engage the Arabs in the battle of Yarmuk.

210 *Amān*: 'safety, protection or assurance/promise thereof'. One expects to be told that Khalid defeated the Roman force before returning to take Damascus; Agapius is probably combining TC with his Muslim source here.



the) country of the city of Bostra that they call Gabitha,<sup>211</sup> on the river named Yarmuk. **The Romans were cruelly routed** and abandoned this region. The battle happened in this way...<sup>212</sup> | Next year the Arabs returned to the area round Damascus. The patrician, having learned of that, trembled and sent word to the Sacellarius of the king, who was at Edessa. He gathered together 10,000 soldiers and came to find the patrician at Hims, who had with him 60,000. When they met the Arabs, the Romans were defeated. **40,000** men of the Roman army fell that day, including **Baanes and the Sacellarius**. A multitude of them drowned in the river Yarmuk. **The son of Shahrbaraz escaped with his life and submitted to the Arabs** and he went and lived in Hims...<sup>213</sup> The Arabs, having vanquished the Romans, came to Damascus and arranged terms with its inhabitants. Other cities likewise submitted to them.

*Chron 1234: The Romans were routed* by the Arabs and many of them were massacred, the number of the slain amounting to **40,000**; **Baanes and the Sacellarius** were killed while **the son of Shahrbaraz escaped with his life and submitted to the Arabs**, who gave him guarantees and he lived in the city of Hims...<sup>214</sup> | When Heraclius heard this news (of the capture of Damascus and Hims), he mustered more than 300,000 troops from Armenia, Syria and the Roman heartlands...<sup>215</sup> The Arabs left Damascus and pitched

211 The implication is that there was an internal struggle for control of Arabia, which is interesting, but, as Chabot notes, this sentence is possibly corrupt. Arabia here means the Roman province of Arabia, which at this time extended from just south of Damascus to what is now modern central Jordan.

212 Msyr now gives the notice that I placed under my previous entry ('An Arab-Byzantine encounter near Hims'), but it is evident that this battle, in which the Romans are routed on the river Yarmuk, is the same as that narrated by Msyr for 'the next year', when a multitude of Romans drown in the river Yarmuk.

213 Msyr now recounts how the son of Shahrbaraz offered to 'Umar to lead an attack against the Persians, but the daughters of Khusrau, captives at Medina, warned 'Umar against it because of the son of Shahrbaraz's perfidy towards his own people. 'Umar believed them and had the son of Shahrbaraz crucified. The account is also given by *Chron 1234*, but not by Theophanes and Agapius, and so presumably is from Dionysius, not TC.

214 This sentence is found in the previous notice ('An Arab-Byzantine encounter near Hims'), but seems to belong here. *Chron 1234* effectively has two accounts of the battle of Yarmuk, one from TC (note that the figure of 40,000 Roman dead also occurs in Theophanes) and one from Muslim sources. *Chron 1234* now narrates a Muslim-Byzantine encounter near Baalbek and the beginning of the Arab siege of Damascus, neither of which are mentioned by the other dependants of TC.

215 At this point the chronicler recounts the deliberations of the Arabs about what to do in the face of this large Roman force, evidently drawn from Muslim sources (see my 'Arabic, Syriac and Greek Historiography'). -

camp by the river Yarmuk. As the Romans marched towards the Arab camp, every city and village on their way which had surrendered to the Arabs shouted threats at them. No tongue can describe the crimes that the Romans committed on their passage and it is not seemly even to bring to mind their foul deeds. For some days on that same river the two camps confronted each other. They held peace talks to put an end to the conflict, but they could not agree to each other's demands. So they made ready for battle and amidst the preparations Abu Sufyan arrived at the Arab camp to reinforce the Arabs in their conflict.<sup>216</sup> Then they beat their drums and sounded their trumpets and fought all day until the dark night came upon them and the Romans were defeated. The Romans turned tail and fled before the Arabs, and were cut down by the latter's swords. They were disorientated and did not know in which direction to run. Many of them made for the bright light of the fire of some shepherds, pushing ahead so heedlessly that many thousands – more than those who had been killed in the battle – fell headlong from a steep cliff and were crushed to death. The Arabs returned to Damascus, elated with their great victory. The Damascenes greeted them outside the city and welcomed them joyfully in and all treaties and assurances were reaffirmed.<sup>217</sup>

Cf. *Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §16. Theodore fought a battle with many thousands of Romans at the town of Gabitha, but panic and the force of the foe was in the Roman legions in such a way that scarcely a few were left from them who could bear the message (of their defeat). Even Theodore, brother of the king,<sup>218</sup> was killed in this struggle. The Saracens, informed of such a great and ruinous slaughter of noble Romans and with fear of the Roman name removed, took firm possession of the provinces which they had not long since invaded, and located their rule at Damascus, the most splendid city of Syria.

216 This detail is clearly adduced from a Muslim source. Though surely of little interest to Syriac-speaking Christians, the participation of Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, father of Mu'awiya I, in the battle of Yarmuk occasioned much speculation in Muslim scholarship: e.g. Azdi, *FS*, 219, portrays Abu Sufyan begging 'Umar to let him join the Muslims in having a go at the infidels; Baladhuri, 135, says he came to Syria wishing to see his sons, who lived there; Tabari, 1.2348–49, has him cheering on the Byzantines.

217 The anti-Roman (i.e. anti-Chalcedonian) and pro-Arab stance of this passage probably comes from Dionysius, who at one point says of the Arab conquests: 'If, as is true, we have suffered some harm... nonetheless it was no slight advantage for us to be delivered from the cruelty of the Romans' (Msyr 11.III, 410/413; *Chron. 1234*, 237).

218 Probably a mistake for Theodore the Sacellarius.



(636–42) The Arabs fight the Persians<sup>219</sup>

Theophanes: The Saracens invaded Persia. They gave battle and utterly defeated the Persians, whom they subjugated entirely. Hormizd, king of Persia, took to flight and, abandoning his palace, made for the innermost part of Persia.<sup>220</sup> The Saracens on their part captured the daughters of Khusrau and all the royal equipment and these were brought to 'Umar.

Agapius:<sup>221</sup> Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas<sup>222</sup> left Yathrib and marched across the desert of Qadash until he came to Qadisiyya, which lies five parasangs from Kufa, where he set up camp. When Yazdgird heard of the advance of the Arabs, he assembled many troops and dispatched them against them. They camped on the Euphrates opposite Kufa. Then they engaged and fought by the village of Qadisiyya. The Arabs defeated the Persians, pursuing them to Ctesiphon (Mahuzā), the city of Khusrau, which is on the Tigris. Then Yazdgird went out with all his generals and warriors and encamped on the east bank of the Tigris and he fought the Arabs and defeated them, but then the Arabs (on the west side) launched themselves into the water and all of them crossed the water with their horses. They attacked the Persians and defeated them and captured Ctesiphon and the region of Wasit together with its environs. They destroyed the royal treasuries and such like. Yazdgird made his way

219 Theophanes, 341 (source unclear, but possibly massively abbreviating TC); Agapius, 470–71; Msyr 11.VI–VII, 416–18/421–24; *Chron* 1234, 246–48. For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron* 1234 (tr. Palmer, 151–54), which is fuller than, but close to, Msyr. Cf. *Chron Khuzistan*, 30–31, 35–37; *Chron Siirt* XCIV, 580–81, CVI, 627–28. Muslim sources commonly date Sa'd's departure from Medina and the battle of Qadisiyya to AH 15–16/636–37, the capture of Ctesiphon to winter 16/637, of Hulwan to 19/640 and of Nihawand to 21/642 (Caetani, *Annali*, 3.629–33, and *idem*, *Chronographia*, 181, 189–90, 217, 238). See Donner, *Conquests*, 157–220.

220 One assumes Yazdgird is meant, though there are hints elsewhere that the Arab conquest of Persia began already in Hormizd's reign; cf. Msyr 11.V, 414/417: 'Umar sent an army into the land of the Persians. There the Persians were in a state of discord, confusion and violent warfare: some wanted to make Yazdgird son of Khusrau king over them, others Hormizd. There was a battle and the Arabs won; the Persians were killed and their empire was weakened. Subsequently, Hormizd was killed and Yazdgird reigned.'

221 In Vasiliev's time this part of the manuscript of Agapius was defective, and Vasiliev made suggestions on the basis of comparison with Dionysius. The manuscript is now readable (see Appendix 3) and I translate here directly from the manuscript.

222 A member of the Zuhra clan of the tribe of Quraysh and cousin of the prophet, Muhammad's mother. He fought in battles in Arabia alongside Muhammad and also in Iraq, where he served as governor of Kufa for the caliphs 'Umar and 'Uthman (see *EI*, 'Sa'd b. Abi Wakkas').

to Hulwan and there mustered many troops. But the Arabs pursued him and caught up with him at Hulwan and defeated him and killed all his men. Yazdgird escaped and made it to Nihawand, but the Arabs sought him out and defeated him. Then he fled until he reached Khurasan.

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron* 1234.

*Chron* 1234: Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, whom 'Umar had sent against the Persians, reached the village of Qadash, which the Arabs today call Qadisiyya, on the edge of the desert of Qadash, at about five parasangs from 'Aqla, which is Kufa.<sup>223</sup> While the Arabs were encamped there, Yazdgird mustered his forces and sent them against the Arabs. The Persians came and established themselves on the bank of the Euphrates near Kufa. A man was sent from Hira to spy on the Arab camp. Being an Arab by race he spoke their language, though he was subject to the Persians...<sup>224</sup> He went straight back to the Persians and told them: 'I have seen a people that is hideous, unshod, naked and weak, but they have boundless confidence. The rest I leave up to you.' To the general, however, he revealed in private what he had seen and what he had heard and the emotions that had tormented him. Yet the Persians were unanimous. They marched to Qadash to do battle with the Arabs, but they were routed and the Arabs pursued them right up to the gate of Ctesiphon. Then the Persians gathered their strength for a second encounter. They cut the bridges on the Tigris so that the Arabs could not cross, but the Arabs leapt on their horses and shouted to one another with triumph in their voice: 'God helped us on land; God will protect us in the water.' The horses took them down into the river, treading the Tigris with their hooves, crossing over to the other side. Not one of them was drowned, not even a single horse. Then they fell upon the Persians in their camp, pursuing them, cutting them down. At last they collected the booty from the camp, opened the gates of Ctesiphon, took possession of its treasures, its granaries, and took captive the courtiers of the king and those of his noble lords. Twice more Yazdgird rallied the Persians. Once at a place called Jalula,<sup>225</sup> where

223 'Aqla is the Syriac name for Kufa, one of two garrison cities established by the Muslim conquerors in southern Iraq (along with Basra, which is further to the south).

224 The spy from Hira encounters a tribesman of Ma'add eating bread and delousing his shirt while urinating, meaning that he 'was putting on the new, getting rid of the old and killing enemies' (see Brock, 'Syriac Views', 13, who notes that the tale is also told of Homer). Msyr adds a further anecdote about a Persian soldier fleeing from a naked lance-bearing Arab of Ma'add.

225 A small town in Iraq north-east of Ctesiphon, quite near the modern border with Iran. See *EI*, 'Djalula'.



the Arabs caught up with them, routed them and massacred them. The last stand of the Persians was near a city called Nihawand in the mountains of Media, but again the Arabs cut them to pieces. Within one year the Arabs had made themselves masters of Persia.

{MSyr adds: Then Yazdgird, last king of the Persians, when he saw that his country had been devastated and his armies annihilated and that the Persian people had been uprooted and dispersed, and when he realised that he could no longer lead them against the ferocity of the Arabs, he himself took flight before them. He went to the region of the Turks, to the land of Margiana, which they call Sijistan.} <sup>226</sup>

### Heraclius' farewell to Syria <sup>227</sup>

Theophanes: As for Heraclius he abandoned Syria in despair and, taking the holy Cross from Jerusalem, <sup>228</sup> proceeded to Constantinople.

Agapius: Heraclius made his way from Mabbug to Antioch, for he had already despaired of (retaining) Syria, namely al-Sham, and was certain that the Arabs would conquer it. | When Heraclius, while at Antioch, saw the rout of the Romans and learned what the Arabs had done to the Persians, he was overcome with anger and distress and afflicted with grief. He wrote to

<sup>226</sup> Margiana was the region of the delta of the river Murghab (known in Greek as Margos), which was by the city of Merw, and corresponds to modern southern Turkmenistan and north-east Iran. It would have been equivalent to the early Islamic province of Khurasan, not Sijistan, which is further to the south. *Chron 1234* just says: 'Yazdgird fled to Sijistan.'

<sup>227</sup> Theophanes, 337; Agapius, 470 | 471/90v-91r; Msyr 11.VII, 418-19/424-25; *Chron 1234*, 251. Cf. Eutychius, 138. The tale of Heraclius bidding farewell to Syria after the defeat of Roman troops at the battle of Yarmuk is also narrated by Muslim sources (e.g. Tabari, 1.2395-96, who also notes Heraclius' scorched-earth policy, saying it was carried out in the area between Alexandretta and Tarsus; Yaqut, s.v. 'Sūriya'; Ibn al-'Adim, 1.429-30, 451, 581).

<sup>228</sup> The removal of the Holy Cross by Heraclius is not mentioned by Agapius or Dionysius and so probably does not come from TC, unless *Chron 1234*'s remark that Heraclius 'raised the rod in his hand' is a garbled reference to the Cross. It is recorded by Sebeos, 131: 'The Lord's Cross remained in the divinely built city (Jerusalem) until the second capture of Jerusalem by the sons of Ishmael. It then went in flight to the capital city with all the vessels of the church.' Nicephorus, §18, also notes this transfer, but dates it much earlier: 'After it (the Cross) had been elevated there (in Jerusalem), the king immediately sent it to Byzantion (Constantinople); Sergius, the patriarch of Byzantion, received it in procession at Blachernai, and, after bringing it to the Great Church (the Hagia Sophia), he elevated it. This happened in the second indiction (628-29).' Nicephorus is using a Constantinopolitan source at this point (Mango, *Breviarum*, 14) and so is perhaps to be preferred. For further reading see n. 141 above.

Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia ordering them not to engage the Arabs in battle and not to oppose the decree of God. <sup>229</sup> He informed them that this was a scourge sent by God Almighty upon His people and that there was no escaping the decree of God and no avoiding the fulfilment of what God Almighty had promised to Ishmael son of Abraham: that many kings would issue from his loins. <sup>230</sup>

MSyr: **Heraclius, king of the Romans**, when he saw the devastation that prevailed, **departed with sorrow from Antioch** and went to **Constantinople**. **It is said that he gave a parting farewell to Syria, saying: *sōsou Syria*, which means (in Greek): 'rest in peace, Syria'**. He had given orders to **his troops** and sent them to **pillage and lay waste** the villages and cities, **as if the country already belonged to the enemy**. The Romans seized and plundered everything that they found. More than the Arabs these Romans despoiled the lands and ceded control of them and indeed relinquished control of them to the Arabs, who became their new rulers. Heraclius **wrote** to all the **Romans in Mesopotamia, Egypt and Armenia**, saying that no one should engage **with the Arabs in battle**, but whoever could **hold on to** his post should do so.

*Chron 1234*: A man from the Christian Arabs came to Antioch and informed Heraclius of the destruction of the Roman armies and that none had escaped to tell the tale. **King Heraclius departed from Antioch in great sorrow and entered Constantinople. It is said that he gave a parting farewell to Syria, saying: *sōsou Syria*, which means, 'rest in peace, Syria'**, as if he despaired of ever seeing her again. After that he raised the rod in his hand and gave leave to **his troops to lay waste** <sup>231</sup> and **pillage** wherever they were, **as if Syria already belonged to the enemy**. He **wrote** and sent (instructions) to **Mesopotamia, Armenia, Egypt** and the other provinces where

<sup>229</sup> There is a possible connection here with *Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §12: 'On hearing the report (about Arab victories against the Byzantines), Heraclius warned his brother that he should in no way fight with such people, for indeed he was experienced in the knowledge of the discipline of astrology and should anything happen by chance, he would know somehow.'

<sup>230</sup> The part missing in Vasiliev's edition reads: *lā budda min tamām mā wa'ada Allāh ta'ālā Isma'il*. This is a reference to Genesis 21:13: 'I will make the son of the maidservant (Ishmael son of Abraham via Hagar) into a nation also (as well as Isaac), because he is your (Abraham's) offspring', and 21:18: 'Lift the boy (Ishmael) up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation.'

<sup>231</sup> Reading *neshbūn*, as in Msyr, rather than *nesbūn* ('take'). Note that this section on Roman devastation of northern Syria is only in Dionysius and so may reflect Miaphysite polemic against Heraclius, though some scholars have accepted it, interpreting it as a scorched-earth policy by Heraclius (e.g. Kaegi, *Conquests*, 140, 146, 148).



**Romans** remained that they should not do **battle with the Arabs**, nor stand against the decree of the Lord, but that each one should **hold on to his city and province**, until the situation exceeded his strength.

Cf. *Chron Siirt* CVI, 626: Heraclius proposed to his men that they should not oppose the will of God and not fight the people (of the Arabs), but that they should limit themselves to holding on to their cities and their provinces<sup>232</sup> and even if they were asked to pay taxes they should do so. He departed from Syria, despairing of (holding) it.

{**Minor Arab raids**: MSyr: At that time when the Arabs invaded the land of the Persians, they went up to the mountain of Mardin, next to Resh'aina, and killed many monks in the monastery called Qedar and in that of Benatha, because they had been told that they were spies for the Persians. The few monks who survived came into the desert, to the west of the river named the Balikh.<sup>233</sup> There they found a spring and built near it a monastery, which they called the monastery of Beth Rishyar, which was (the name of) the abbot of the monastery of the Chicks (so-called because the founder had rescued some bird eggs at the spot).

The Arabs, having heard tell of the pilgrimage fair which took place at the monastery of Mar Simeon the Stylite, in the region of Antioch, went there and captured a great number of men and women, and numerous boys and girls. The Christians were reduced to despair, some of them saying: 'Why does God allow this to happen?' But the discerning will perceive that it is justice that allowed it to happen, because instead of fasting, keeping vigil and recitation, the Christians were practising licentiousness, drunkenness, dance and other forms of debauchery at the martyrs' fairs and so angered God. It is therefore with justice that He begins to chastise us so that we might understand.

At the time when Heraclius sent a man named Gregory<sup>234</sup> to guard the defile in Cilicia,<sup>235</sup> so that the Arabs would not go beyond it, the holy and

232 *Hafz mudunihim wa-a'mālihim*. This is an exact translation of *Chron* 1234's *nṣar mḏīteh w-athreh*, and in general this notice is extremely close to the notice of Agapius and Dionysius.

233 The Balikh river begins as a spring by the modern Syria-Turkey border and flows south until it meets the Euphrates at modern Raqqa.

234 *PLRE*, 'Gregorius 17'.

235 Cilicia was a province lying along the Mediterranean coast of modern south-east Turkey with the Taurus mountain range on its northern side. In the west of it lay the Amanus mountain range, which blocked the way to north-west Syria and it was presumably to this area that Gregory was sent. Bosworth, 'Byzantine Defence System', 119–20, argues that by *k leisoura* (the word I translate by 'defile') is meant a kind of *cordon sanitaire*.

illustrious bishop Epiphanius completed his life in true martyrdom for the orthodox faith...<sup>236</sup> The day after the killing of the venerable saint the head of a troop of Arabs, named Qanan,<sup>237</sup> came with some captives. Gregory went out with the army to seize the captives. When they arrived at the camp of the Arabs, the latter went out suddenly to engage them and killed them all. Having reached Gregory himself, they struck the horse on which he was mounted and cut its legs. He called out to a soldier to bring him another horse, but he could neither turn round nor see him. The Arabs caught up with Gregory and killed him, just as Saint Epiphanius, the true martyr, had predicted.<sup>238</sup>

### (639–40) The Arab conquest of Egypt<sup>239</sup>

Theophanes: They (the Saracens) made an expedition against Egypt. When Cyrus, the bishop of Alexandria, had been informed of their approach, he took measures and, fearing their rapacity, concluded a treaty with them, promising that Egypt would pay them every year 200,000 gold coins and would send them gold in respect of the appointed delay. By providing these sums for three years, he spared Egypt from disaster.<sup>240</sup> Now Cyrus was

236 There ensues a long account telling how Gregory, scornful of the Arabs and non-Chalcedonians, encountered Epiphanius, ordered him to convert to Chalcedonianism and killed him when he refused.

237 *Qnn*. The name of this Arab chief is not known from elsewhere and does not sound like a Muslim Arab name; he may have been a Christian Arab chief collaborating with the Muslims or acting on his own, taking advantage of the chaos.

238 These notices are only in MSyr (11.V, 414/419; 11.VI, 417/422; 11.VI, 415–16/422–33). They are probably taken from monastic chronicles (the first notice is also partly in *Chron* 1234, 245, and *Chron* 724, 148) and illustrate how much extra material was recorded, even if a lot of it was subsequently lost.

239 Theophanes, 338–39; Agapius, 471–74/91r–92r; MSyr 11.VII, 419/425; *Chron* 1234, 251–53. The Egyptian historians John of Nikiu, CXI–CXXI, and Eutychius, 142–48, both recount Egypt's conquest at length, though from very different perspectives. See also Caetani, *Chronographia*, 210, 219–20, 227–28 (AH 18–19/639–40); Butler, *Arab Conquest*; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 2.214, nn. XVI–XIX; Chagnon, *La conquête*.

240 Butler, *Arab Conquest*, 207–9, rejects any notion of Cyrus doing a deal with the Arabs, but see my *Seeing Islam*, 574–90, and Nicephorus, §23: 'Cyrus informed the king that he was going to conclude an agreement with Ambrus, phylarch of the Saracens, and pay him tribute which, he stated, he would raise by a commercial levy, while the imperial taxes would not be affected. (He also recommended that) the Augusta Eudokia or another of the king's daughters should be offered in marriage (to Ambrus) with a view to his being consequently baptised in the holy bath and becoming a Christian; for Ambrus and his army had confidence in Cyrus and regarded him with great affection.'



accused before the king of giving to the Saracens the gold of Egypt. The king, in anger, sent a message to recall him and appointed a certain Manuel, an Armenian by origin, as *augustalis*.<sup>241</sup> At the end of the year<sup>242</sup> the Saracen tribute collectors came to receive the gold, but Manuel drove them away saying that 'I am not unarmed like Cyrus that I should pay you tribute. Nay, I am armed.' When these men had departed, the Saracens immediately took up arms against Egypt and, after joining battle with Manuel, routed him. He took refuge in Alexandria with a few men. Then the Saracens imposed taxes on Egypt. When Heraclius heard of these events, he dispatched Cyrus to persuade the Saracens to depart from Egypt according to the former treaty. So Cyrus went to the camp of the Saracens and offered many excuses, saying he was innocent of the transgression and urging them, if they so wished, to confirm the former accord by oath. The Saracens, however, were not satisfied and said to the bishop: 'Are you able to swallow that enormous pillar?' He replied: 'That is impossible', to which they replied: 'Nor is it possible for us to depart from Egypt at this time.'

Agapius: He ('Umar) dispatched Sa'id and 'Amr, sons of al-'As,<sup>243</sup> to Egypt and they entered it. Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria, met them and made an agreement with them that he would pay to them every year 200,000 gold coins on the condition that their troops would not set foot in Egypt and not go up to its borders; with this proviso he would prepare and send the monies to them. They concluded a pact with him on this basis; Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria, remained resolutely in charge of it (Egypt) for three years and no Arab entered it. Then some people from Egypt went to King Heraclius

241 That is, *praefectus augustalis*, the governor of the diocese of Egypt, which incorporated the provinces of Egypt and Cyrenaica. *PLRE*, 'Manuel 3', says this information is incorrect.

242 The three dependants of TC are close enough here to see that they are copying from the same source; e.g. Theophanes: *Plērōthentos tou chronou, oi tōn sarakēnōn praktōres paregenonto labein to chrysiōn* / *Chron* 1234: *kad shemat sha(n)īā, ethaw īzgaḏē d-ṭayyāyē... d-neshūn la-mḏāntā* (Msyr: *dahbā*). Since the language is quite simple, however, it is difficult to determine whether Greek or Syriac is the original language. If the detail about Cyrus wearing a woollen tunic was in the original, then the Syriac account could well be primary, since the Syriac word *zaynā* means armour as well as arms, which makes the contrast easy (Cyrus wears a tunic / Manuel wears armour), whereas the Greek *hoplon* only means 'arms'. But this is not decisive.

243 Agapius is confused here; Sa'id ibn al-'As (ibn Abi Uhayha) was not the brother of 'Amr ibn al-'As (ibn Wa'il), though both were of the tribe of Quraysh. Sa'id is not connected by Muslim historians with the conquest of Egypt, but rather with campaigns in the east, serving for a time as governor of Kufa for the caliph 'Uthman. 'Amr ibn al-'As is famed for leading the conquest of Egypt and for serving as its governor on a number of occasions (see *EI*, 'Amr b. al-'As').

and denounced Cyrus before him, alleging that he was taking the monies of Egypt and giving them to the Arabs, and that he was siding with them and corresponding with them<sup>244</sup> and paying to them the taxes of Egypt which are owing to you (Heraclius). Heraclius was angry about that and he dispatched to Egypt a patrician called Manuel and ordered him to remove Cyrus from the government of Egypt and to take charge of that himself and to undertake the defence of its people. At the end of the year the envoys of the Arabs<sup>245</sup> came to Egypt, as usual, wanting their monies, and they found Manuel based in Egypt with the troops of the Romans. They (the Roman troops) took them (the Arabs' messengers) and brought them to him (Manuel) and he asked them about their business and their needs and they told him their story. When he realised that they wanted monies, he scolded them very angrily and dismissed them scornfully, saying: 'I am not Cyrus the bishop who gave you monies out of fear of you, for he was a pious monk, whereas I am a man of arms, war and valour, as you see from my appearance. You will get nothing from me but contempt and scorn. Leave the country and do not return to it or I will destroy you. Having warned you I am excused (from my future actions).' The Arabs returned to their lord and informed him of that. 'Amr ibn al-'As set off and travelled until he reached Egypt. He met with Manuel there and defeated him and killed all his men. Manuel made it to Alexandria with those of his men who survived. Then the Arabs took control of Egypt.

When the news reached Heraclius he wrote to Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria: 'Some people misinformed me about you and told untruths about you before me, for you had hastened to receive them and to agree to what they asked, since you knew that they were sent as a scourge upon mankind and that God promised Abraham that from Ishmael's loins many kings would issue,<sup>246</sup> and the promise of God is a reality that one cannot turn or escape from. If you can cajole and urge these (Arab) people out of Egypt, by fair means or foul, then do so. If you can push them to accept the original conditions, which were written down and which you agreed with them, then do that. I am handing over to you the command of Egypt and entrusting you with it, so act accordingly.' When the letter of King Heraclius came to Cyrus,

244 *Yamīl maylahum wa-yukātibuhum*: missing in Vasiliev, but readable in the manuscript.

245 Vasiliev has 'the Arabs', but 'envoys of the Arabs' (*rusul al-'arab*) is clear in the manuscript and brings Agapius' text into line with Theophanes and Dionysius.

246 Genesis 21:13; see n. 230 above. The subject of the first part of this sentence is unclear: Heraclius or Cyrus? Vasiliev translates it as an order from Heraclius to Cyrus: 'Hasten to accept the demand of the Arabs and to agree to what they request', but the verbs are in the preterite, not the imperative.



he said: 'How can I get the (Arab) people to leave when I have become a liar in their eyes, especially as they have now taken control of Egypt. However, I shall do my utmost and we shall see how the affair turns out.' So Cyrus left Alexandria and made for the military camp of the (Arab) people. He entered upon 'Amr ibn al-'As and apologised to him. He informed him that he was not the reason for the breaking of the pact between them, rather King Heraclius violated it and changed his mind about it, but he now asked him to enact it according to the original conditions. 'Amr ibn al-'As told him that he would not comply with what he asked and said: 'I do not trust you after you acted treacherously the first time. In addition, what you asked is not possible because we have conquered Egypt by the sword and we will not leave it for anything.' So Cyrus went back to Alexandria without have accomplished anything.

MSyr: 'Umar, king of the Arabs, entered Egypt.<sup>247</sup> Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria, set out to meet him and agreed to pay him every year 200,000 gold coins so that the Arabs would not enter Egypt. Thus 'Umar returned without entering Egypt. At this, certain persons denounced Cyrus to Heraclius for the reason that he gave the gold of Egypt to the Arabians without any compulsion. Because the Romans had been reduced to a despicable way of thinking, Heraclius then wrote to Cyrus that he should no longer administer Egypt and sent an Armenian man whose name was Manuel to administer and govern the land of Egypt. When the emissaries of the Arabs came to receive the gold, they found Manuel, with Roman troops, at Babylon, which today is called Fustat.<sup>248</sup> He sent them away empty-handed saying: 'I am not Cyrus; he was not clad in armour, but in a tunic, and for this reason he would give you the possessions<sup>249</sup> of Egypt. I, however, am wearing armour, as you see for yourselves.' The emissaries returned and reported back to 'Umar, who invaded Egypt. Manuel was defeated and fled with a small number of his men to Alexandria and the Arabs took control of Egypt. Heraclius, on learning that, wrote to Bishop Cyrus to get the Arabs out of Egypt, if he could, by giving them twice the amount of gold that had been agreed upon the first time. Cyrus headed for the military camp of the Arabs and explained that he was not the cause of

247 Msyr is here confusing the general 'Amr (ibn al-'As) with the second caliph, 'Umar (ibn al-Khattab).

248 Babylon was the name of Roman Cairo; Fustat was the name of the new Arab garrison city (derived from the Greek *fossaton*, 'encampment'). See *EI*, 'al-Fustat'; Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*.

249 Chabot's text has *ml'*, but a marginal note in the Aleppo manuscript of Msyr (see the introduction above) says that another manuscript has *qemālēl'* 'chattels'.

the violation. He entreated them and offered them gold, but 'Umar said: 'I will not do what you ask. Now that we have taken control of the country we will not leave it.' With these words the bedouin<sup>250</sup> dismissed Cyrus who returned in sadness.

*Chron 1234*: While the Arabs were in a position of strength, 'Amr ibn al-'As<sup>251</sup> organised an army and came against the land of Egypt...<sup>252</sup> When Cyrus heard of the coming of 'Amr ibn al-'As, he set out to him. He pledged to pay him every year 200,000 gold coins so that the Arabs would not enter Egypt. Certain persons went and denounced Cyrus to King Heraclius because he took the gold of Egypt and he gave it to the Arabs. Heraclius wrote to Cyrus dismissing him from the government of Egypt. He sent a general to Egypt, whose name was Manuel and who was an Armenian by race. When a year had passed, the emissaries of the Arabs came to Egypt as usual to receive the tribute and they found Manuel encamped at Babylon, which today is called Fustat. The emissaries entered into his presence, demanding the gold, and he replied to them: 'I am not Cyrus, who used to give you gold. He did not wear armour, but a woollen tunic; I, however, am wearing armour, as you have seen. Go away and do not come here again.' The emissaries returned and reported back to their emir of what they had been told. They informed him that Cyrus was no longer in charge of Egypt and 'Amr ibn al-'As was afraid to come to Egypt...<sup>253</sup> When 'Amr came to Egypt, they ('the leaders of Alexandria and Egypt') surrendered to him the city. The Arabs entered, fell upon the Romans and slaughtered them. Cyrus and Manuel, when they saw that the Arabs had the upper hand, grabbed whatever church treasures of gold and silver that they could

250 'Arabāyā: this term is almost never applied by Msyr and *Chron 1234* to the Muslim Arabs, but was used in Syriac texts to designate the residents of Beth 'Arabaye, northern Mesopotamia. For example, *Chron Zuqnin*, 151, uses it to refer to the Christian Arabs of this region over whom a certain John was appointed bishop in the mid-seventh century.

251 Written as 'Umar bar (son of) 'As.

252 Dionysius says here that he has read accounts in historical works accusing the Miaphysite patriarch Benjamin of betraying Egypt to the Arabs out of enmity towards the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus, who had been persecuting the Miaphysites. This note appears separately in the ecclesiastical section of Msyr (11.VIII, 422–23/432–33); clearly it goes back to Dionysius himself since it is not related by Theophanes or Agapius.

253 Another segment of the report about Benjamin is given here, explaining that 'Amr had to be encouraged to invade Egypt by Benjamin, who promised the support of the Miaphysites of Egypt in return for all the churches of Egypt being placed under Benjamin's jurisdiction. We then have, again, a mention of the Arabs killing only the Romans and leaving alone the non-Roman population (see n. 56 above).



find, boarded a boat and fled to Constantinople. The patriarch Benjamin then took charge of all the churches of Alexandria and Egypt.

**(638) The capture of Jerusalem and the visit of 'Umar<sup>254</sup>**

Theophanes: 'Umar invaded Palestine and, after investing the holy city for two years, obtained it by agreement;<sup>255</sup> for Sophronius, the bishop of Jerusalem,<sup>256</sup> took a guarantee for the whole of Palestine. 'Umar entered the holy city dressed in filthy garments of camel hair and, showing a devilish pretence, sought out the Temple of the Jews – the one built by Solomon – that he might make it a place of worship for his own blasphemous religion. Seeing this, Sophronius said: 'Verily, this is the abomination of desolation standing in a holy place, as has been spoken through the prophet Daniel.'<sup>257</sup> And with many tears the defender of piety bewailed the Christian people. While 'Umar was there, the patriarch begged him to receive from him a loin cloth with a garment to put on, but he would not suffer to wear them. At length he persuaded him to put them on until his clothes were washed and then he returned them to Sophronius and put on his own.<sup>258</sup>

<sup>254</sup> Theophanes, 339; Agapius, 454 | 475; Msyr 11.VII, 419–20/425–26 (AG 948/636–37); *Chron* 1234, 254–55. Most Muslim sources date 'Umar's visit to Jerusalem to AH 17/638 (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 200–1), though Ibn Khayyat, 105, has 16/637, and Sayf bin 'Umar 15/636 or 16/637 (cited by Tabari, 1.2406, 2408). Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 132–33 (AH 17/AG 949/638); *Chron Siirt* CIV, 623 (4<sup>th</sup> year of 'Umar/638); Eutychius, 138–41. For discussion of this event see Busse, 'Omar b. al-Khattab in Jerusalem'; Gil, *History of Palestine*, 51–56; Hendricks, 'Abominatio Desolationis'; Sahas, 'Sophronius and 'Umar'; al-Tel, *First Islamic Conquest*, 69–132.

<sup>255</sup> *Logō*; see n. 84 above.

<sup>256</sup> On this influential figure, who had been a teacher of rhetoric and a monk before becoming patriarch, see Schönborn, *Sophrone de Jérusalem*. The latter maintains (*ibid.*, 97 n. 136) that Sophronius died on 11 March 639, which provides us with a *terminus ante quem* for the capture of Jerusalem; Guillou, 'Prise', 401, argues that its capture must have already been accomplished by December 637.

<sup>257</sup> Daniel 11:31; cf. Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14. It is presumably Theophanes who gives a pejorative twist to the portrayal of 'Umar in this passage.

<sup>258</sup> Busse, 'Omar b. al-Khattab in Jerusalem', links the clothes theme here to Zachariah 3:1–5, where Joshua, about to be made high priest, arrives before the angel of the Lord 'clothed in filthy garments', which the angel takes away and replaces with new (priestly) ones. However, the fit is not so good between the characters and the situation, and Joshua's clothes are replaced, not washed. But there are occasions in the Bible where clothes are washed, as part of a ritual of purification; cf. Numbers 8:7 and 21, 19:7; Exodus, 19:10, 14; Leviticus 11:25, 14:8–9, 16:26–28. The motif of clothes does appear in Muslim sources (e.g. Azdi, *FS*, 253–54), but here

Agapius: 'Umar ibn al-Khattab went up to Syria and arrived at Jerusalem. The patriarch went out to him and brought him into the city. He looked at it and at the temple that was in it. He prayed in it and remained there for forty days. Then he departed and went to Damascus. He stayed there a long time and then returned to Yathrib. | 'Umar travelled from Yathrib until he came to Palestine and he encamped there. Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, came out to him and took from him a peace agreement for the holy city and all the cities of Palestine. 'Umar gave to him the peace agreement and he drew up for him a document (stating the terms of the agreement). In the document (it was written that) protection was withheld from any Jew that we<sup>259</sup> found in Jerusalem from this day onwards; any (Jew) that we find will be punished in respect of his life<sup>260</sup> and his property. Then 'Umar entered Jerusalem and prayed in it. He entered the great temple, which Solomon son of David had built, and he ordered the establishment of a congregational mosque for the Muslims to pray in. The patriarch saw that 'Umar's dress was filthy, made of wool, and he asked him to accept from him a garment, but he refused. The patriarch insisted and so 'Umar said: 'Be so kind as to take these clothes of mine and give them to someone to wash and lend me these clothes that you have brought for me to wear until my clothes are washed and then I will return them to you.' The patriarch did that, taking 'Umar's clothes and giving them to a washer-man. When the latter was done with them, he (Sophronius) brought them to him ('Umar), who put them on and returned his (Sophronius') clothes to him.

MSyr: King 'Umar came to Palestine and Sophronius, bishop of Jerusalem, went out to meet him. He (Sophronius) took a guarantee<sup>261</sup> for the whole

it is Muslims urging 'Umar to put on clean/luxurious clothes so as not to look lowly before the non-Muslims and in 'Umar's refusal there is criticism of Muslims who wear fine clothes after the fashion of the Romans.

<sup>259</sup> Note the use of the first person. This ancient prohibition had just recently been renewed by Heraclius; see n. 145 above. Levy-Rubin, 'Were the Jews prohibited from Jerusalem?', argues for the authenticity of this clause in the peace agreement for Jerusalem recorded in Muslim sources.

<sup>260</sup> Literally: 'his hair and skin'; cf. n. 100 above.

<sup>261</sup> *Shqal meltā*: the expression in Syriac literally means 'he took the word', but by 'word' is meant a promise that lives and property will be safeguarded, usually backed up by some document specifying the conditions under which this is granted, as is clear from Agapius' phrasing (*akhadha al-amān*). Theophanes uses the exact literal Greek equivalent of the Syriac expression: *logon elaben*. It is perhaps more likely that the Syriac is a calque on the Greek, rather than the other way around.



country and he ('Umar) wrote a document<sup>262</sup> for him, including that it was not permitted for a Jew to live in Jerusalem. When 'Umar entered Jerusalem, he ordered that a mosque for their prayer be built on the place of the temple of Solomon. Since Sophronius saw that 'Umar was wearing dirty clothes, he requested him to accept a garment and a loincloth.<sup>263</sup> He had them brought before him and he strongly urged him to accept, but he ('Umar) did not consent, because he had never taken anything from anyone. He said: 'It is not right for a man to take from another what God has not given him, for God has given to each and every one of mankind what He knows and he who desires to receive something from his companion acts against God.' For such things 'Umar ibn al-Khattab was much praised and these Arabs say many things about him...<sup>264</sup> However, since the bishop strongly urged him, he replied: 'Because you request it of me and have shown me great honour, lend me those (clothes) of yours (for me) to wear until you have taken my robes and given them to be washed, and when you return mine take yours', and thus he did.

*Chron* 1234: 'Umar set off for Jerusalem in the year AG 946 (634–35), 26 of Heraclius (635–36) and 15 of the Arabs (636–37). He came with many troops and the learned and leading men of Quraysh and also 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, uncle of the prophet Muhammad. He had appointed as his deputy in Medina 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was married to Muhammad's daughter Fatima. 'Umar came to Jerusalem riding on a camel. He was positioned on a howdah, with barley flour on one side, and on the other dates, a water pouch and a vine branch. Arab troops came to meet him and welcomed him. Lastly, the general Abu 'Ubayda came. The two of them dismounted to meet each other and they received each other with a greeting. When he ('Umar) arrived at the city, the notables of the city went out to him. One of them was the one called Abu Ju'aydid<sup>265</sup> by the Arabs; another

262 Syriac: *sigilliyūn*; cf. Greek *sigillion*, though the word is perhaps ultimately from Assyrian *sikillu/sigillu*, 'a stone'. Agapius uses the Arabic form: *sijill*.

263 *Lebūshā w-sedūnā*: this corresponds to Theophanes' *sindōn syn endyma* and is a possible indication that a Greek text underlies this account.

264 Msyr includes here a little encomium to the simplicity of 'Umar's life-style: 'He was certainly just and removed from greed, to the degree that from all the empire that the Arabs ruled, that is, from all the wealth and treasures of the Romans and Persians, he took nothing for himself. He did not change the simplicity of his habits, not even the piece of hide that was placed under him when he rode by camel and that he used for sitting on the ground or sleeping on.'

265 Ibn Ju'ayd, one of the grandees of Jerusalem (Azdi, *FS*, 254).

was the bishop Sophronius.<sup>266</sup>

He ('Umar) gave a covenant and pledges and wrote for them a document, as they requested, (giving protection) for their churches and laws, and for the whole of Palestine they received a guarantee and pledges, including that no Jew live in Jerusalem. When it was written and the covenant ratified by them, King 'Umar entered Jerusalem. He ordered that a mosque,<sup>267</sup> that is, a house of prayer, be built on the place of the temple of Solomon for the Arabs. Bishop Sophronius saw that King 'Umar wore dirty clothes and offered him a garment and a loincloth and requested him to accept (them) from him. He strongly entreated (him), but 'Umar did not consent to accept them and he said: 'It is not right for me to take anything from a man'...<sup>268</sup> Since the bishop strongly urged him, he said to him: 'Because of your urging and because I desire to honour you, be so kind as to lend me those to wear until you have taken these clothes of mine and given them to be washed, and then as soon as you return them take away yours, and thus he did. As soon as the king's clothes were washed, he put them on again and returned to the bishop those of his. After 'Umar had remained a little in Jerusalem, he returned to his city of Yathrib. In the year 18 of the Arabs (639), after 'Umar had gone back down to his city, a bout of plague was unleashed on all the land of Palestine and Abu 'Ubayda, emir and general of the Arabs, was struck by this sickness and died at Emmaus ('Amwas), a city of Palestine. Mu'adh ibn Jabal took his place.<sup>269</sup>

266 I include this paragraph, though it is from Muslim sources (cf. Azdi, *FS*, 252–54) and not TC, as an illustration of how *Chron* 1234 combines the two types of source material. It is preceded by an account of a battle outside the city between the Arabs, led by Abu 'Ubayda, and the Jerusalemites and the surrender of the latter on the condition that 'Umar I come himself to ratify the peace agreement between them and the Arabs.

267 Here written *msgdt* whereas Msyr rendered it as *msgd*.

268 *Chron* 1234 also praises 'Umar's simplicity: 'For this 'Umar was constantly weaving fans from the leaves of the date-palm and giving them for sale; out of (the income) from these he provided for his clothing, and by the toil of his hands he sustained himself.'

269 This concluding notice is also from Muslim sources, as is suggested by the use of the Hijra era alone. This bout of plague, known as the 'plague of 'Amwas', is famous in Muslim sources, presumably because it killed a number of celebrated Muslim Arab soldiers. See *EI*, 'Amwas'. For the famous Muslim general Mu'adh ibn Jabal, see *PLRE*, 'Mu'adh ibn Jabal'.



### The subjection of Syria<sup>270</sup>

Theophanes: 'Umar sent 'Iyad (Iad)<sup>271</sup> to Syria and he made all of Syria subject to the Saracens. I John, surnamed Kataias, the governor of Osrhoene,<sup>272</sup> came to 'Iyad at Chalcis<sup>273</sup> and covenanted to pay him every year 100,000 gold coins on condition that he would not cross the Euphrates either peacefully or by force of arms as long as that amount of gold was paid to him. Thereupon John returned to Edessa and, having collected the annual tax, sent it to 'Iyad. When Heraclius heard of this, he judged John to be guilty for having done such a thing without the king's knowledge, and, having recalled him, condemned him to exile. In his stead he appointed a general named Ptolemy.<sup>274</sup> The Arabs captured Antioch. Mu'awiya was appointed by 'Umar commander and emir of all the territory under the Saracens, from Egypt to the Euphrates.<sup>275</sup>

Agapius: Abu 'Ubayda dispatched 'Iyad ibn Ghanm<sup>276</sup> with a large army to go around all the cities of Syria. He gave them guarantees of safety and subjected them all. Then he returned to Mesopotamia and took all their cities

270 Theophanes, 339–40; Agapius, 476–77; MSyr 11.VII, 420/426 (at 416/421 and 418/424 MSyr mentions raiding around Aleppo and Antioch); *Chron* 1234, 256. Ibn Khayyat, 105, records that Aleppo, Antioch and Mabbug (Manbij) were taken in AH 16/637.

271 'Iyad ibn Ghanm al-Fihri was a member of the tribe of Quraysh and an important general of the early Arab conquests, famed principally for his subjection of northern Syria and Mesopotamia (see *PLRE*, 'Iad').

272 *PLRE*, 'Ioannes qui et Cataeas 241'. Osrhoene was the province in north Mesopotamia, to the east of the Euphrates, of which Edessa was the capital. The fact that Theophanes can give the full name of the governor, whereas Agapius and Dionysius only impart his first name, may mean the original source was in Greek.

273 Known in full as Chalcis ad Belum; it was an important Roman city of Hellenistic foundation, a short distance to the south of modern Aleppo. The Arab conquerors established a camp some 3–4 kilometres away, at a place they called Qinnasrin, and in the 680s this became a provincial capital; see Whitcomb, 'Hadir Qinnasrin'.

274 *PLRE*, 'Ptolemaeus 7'.

275 Mu'awiya was from the powerful Umayyad family of Quraysh, which became the first dynasty of the new Muslim Empire; he acted as the governor of Greater Syria and effective director of the conquests for the caliphs 'Umar and 'Uthman from ca. 640 onwards. See *EI*, 'Mu'awiya (I)'. Note that Agapius' remark that Mu'awiya was a direct replacement for Abu 'Ubayda as governor of Syria is not backed up by Muslim sources, which say he died of plague after 'Umar I's visit to Jerusalem (see the account of *Chron* 1234 above) and was succeeded by Mu'awiya's brother, Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan, who died very soon afterwards.

276 Agapius has 'Abbad ibn 'Athim ('Atim, 'Anim etc.) instead of 'Iyad ibn Ghanm; the difference in spelling is small in Arabic, but the error supposes translation from Syriac or Greek, which do not have the Arabic letter *dāl* and have to use a *dāl*.

and gave them a guarantee after they had made an agreement to bring to him every year 100,000 gold coins on condition that no Arab cross the Euphrates for any reason (and to do this) for as long as adherence to the condition endured. The people of Mesopotamia brought to 'Iyad ibn Ghanm the taxes for one year and that was accomplished by the patrician John,<sup>277</sup> who was the governor of Heraclius, king of the Romans, over Mesopotamia. When news of this reached King Heraclius, he sent word deposing John and banished him to Africa and he handed Mesopotamia over to a man named Ptolemy, one of the patricians of the Romans. Then the Arabs conquered Antioch and took captive those in its (surrounding) villages and farms. 'Umar removed Abu 'Ubayda from (command of) the Syrias and appointed in his place Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan; this took place in year 6 of 'Umar, 18 of the Arabs and 29 of Heraclius (639).

**MSyr: The Arabs passed through the cities of Syria and subjected them. John, general of the Romans, came to the Arabs at Qinnasrin and made a pact to give them 100,000 gold coins a year on the condition that the Arabs did not cross the Euphrates to the east and did not enter Mesopotamia. John gave the tribute of one year to them. When Heraclius heard, he, in perverseness of mind, became angry at John and sent him into exile, for God had abandoned the Roman Empire, reducing its director to blind judgement.**

*Chron* 1234: 'Iyad ibn Ghanm and an army of the Arabs passed through the cities of Syria, giving them guarantees, and Syria was subjected to the Arabs. John, who had been left behind by Heraclius to guard Mesopotamia, came to 'Iyad ibn Ghanm at Qinnasrin and made with him a pact to give him 100,000 gold coins a year for the whole of Mesopotamia on the condition that the Arabs did not cross the Euphrates to the east. Having ratified these terms, John returned, collected the taxes and sent the tribute of one year to him. When Heraclius heard, he became angry at John and sent him away and appointed a certain Ptolemy instead, for God had abandoned the Roman Empire. A year later king 'Umar sent word and appointed Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan over all Syria. He took Antioch by siege and plundered the villages around, leading the people away as slaves. Then the Arabs sent a demand for the tribute of Mesopotamia.

277 Agapius has Paul (*bwls*), but Theophanes and Dionysius' agreement on John suggest that Agapius' reading is a mistake for John ('*ywns*'); the difference in form between the two names is small in Arabic.



**(639–40) The capture of Mesopotamia**<sup>278</sup>

Theophanes: 'Iyad crossed the Euphrates with his whole army and reached Edessa. The Edessenes opened their gates and were given terms, including their territory, their military commander and the Romans who were with him. The Arabs went on to Tella (Constantia), which they besieged and took by war and killed 300 Romans. From there they went on to Dara, which they also took by war and slew many people therein. In this way 'Iyad captured all of Mesopotamia.

Agapius: 'Iyad crossed the Euphrates and headed for Edessa because in the second year they did not bring what they had agreed upon. When he arrived there, its people came out to him and asked him for a guarantee of safety for them and for Ptolemy, their governor and patrician. 'Iyad entered Edessa and evicted Ptolemy and sent him off to the Romans. Then he extracted from Edessa 100,000 gold coins in a few days. He departed from it and came to Tella<sup>279</sup> because it had not been taken by guarantee along with the rest of the cities of Mesopotamia. When he came up to it, the Romans who were in it defied him. He was angry and erected siege-engines, and he and they kept at it until he conquered the city and killed the Romans who were in it.<sup>280</sup> 'Iyad conquered the cities of Mesopotamia by agreement except Dara, which he conquered by the sword and killed the Romans in it. He organised his governors over all the cities of Mesopotamia and returned to Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan who was in Syria.

MSyr: **The Arabs crossed the Euphrates because the tribute was not given to them. The Edessenes went out and obtained a guarantee for their city; the Roman army withdrew in sadness from all the cities. Tella and Dara refused to submit to the Arabs; this is why the latter took them**

278 Theophanes, 340; Agapius, 477; Msyr 11.VII, 420–21/426 (AG 951/639–40); *Chron* 1234, 256–57. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 150–51 (AG 948/636–37, 952/640–41); *Chron* 819, 11; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 209–10, 219 (AH 18–19/639–40). See Posner, 'Muslim Conquest of Mesopotamia'.

279 Agapius has here Mawzan, which must be a corruption of the full name of Tella: *Tellā d-Mwzlt* (as given by *Chron* 1234 in his notice on this event). Tella is modern Viranşehir in southern Turkey.

280 Dionysius makes the same observation, implying a distinction between the Romans and the rest of the population; it could simply indicate the distinction between soldiers and civilians, but it might be linked to the fact that the religious controversies of the sixth and early seventh centuries had created/widened a breach in Syria and Mesopotamia between Greek-speaking Chalcedonians and Syriac-speaking Miaphysites. See nn. 56 and 253 above; Cameron, 'New Themes and Styles', esp. 86–87; Romeny, *Religious Origins of Nations*.

by force<sup>281</sup> and killed all the Romans who were in them. 'Iyad ibn Ghanm subjected all of Mesopotamia and then returned to Syria.

*Chron* 1234: **The Arabs sent a demand for the tribute of Mesopotamia from Ptolemy. When it was not given to them, they crossed the Euphrates, in the year AG 951 (639–40), and made for Edessa. The Edessenes went out and received a guarantee and a covenant, as did the people of Harran. The first Arab to rule in Edessa was Abu Badr.**<sup>282</sup> The Edessenes had also received a guarantee with regard to Ptolemy and his Romans, so they returned to their country. But when 'Iyad ibn Ghanm came to **Tella** (Tella d-Mawzelat), the arrogant Romans in the city did not consent to make an agreement. They fought with the Arabs, but 'Iyad mounted a vigorous offensive, captured the city and killed the 300 Romans who were in it. Next he went to the city of **Dara**, assaulted it likewise, took it and killed every Roman in it. But Resh'aina, Mardin and Amida he took by amnesty and covenant and oaths. It was at Amida that 'Iyad ibn Ghanm was killed and was buried.

{**Valentinus and David Urtaya attack the Arabs:** Dionysius: Valentinus is defeated in the first encounter; David, an Armenian, starts pillaging the local people in Mesopotamia, for which he is rebuked by the commander Titus, 'a Syrian by race'. 'Iyad ibn Ghanm defeats David's troops and kills David. Titus escapes to Amida.}<sup>283</sup>

**'Umar orders a census**<sup>284</sup>

Theophanes: 'Umar ordered a census to be made of all the inhabited territory under his rule. The census embraced people, beasts and plants.

281 *B-qrābā*; an alternative to *b-ḥarbā* 'by war', used above (see n. 84 above).

282 Not known from any other source.

283 I summarise here what is a quite long account, which is only recounted by Dionysius (in Msyr 11.X, 428–29/443–44, and *Chron* 1234, 257–58), perhaps because of its pro-Syrian (and possibly pro-Miaphysite) bias. No date is indicated, but evidently it occurs when Iyad ibn Ghanm is still alive (Ibn Khayyat, 120, places his death in AH 20/641). It is unclear whether this is the same Valentinus as rebels against the emperor Constans (see below), but it is likely. *Chron Zuqnin*, 151, says that the patrician Valentinus 'came to make war on the Arabs, but he became afraid at their approach and ran away'.

284 Theophanes, 341; Agapius, 478; Msyr 11.VII, 421/426. *Chron* 1234 does not have this notice, which is quite different in each of the three chronicles; Msyr's stress on imposition of poll-tax may be polemical and should not be taken at face value, especially as the term is not used in the other two sources. Muslim sources mention only 'Umar's registering of Arab tribesmen (e.g. Tabari, 2.749–52). See al-Qadi, 'Population Census'.



Agapius: 'Umar wrote to his governors (ordering) the apportioning of the tax for every place under his authority; the tax registers were established and the tax apportioned province by province, region by region, city by city and village by village. He took tribute and alms.

MSyr: 'Umar ordered that all the countries of his realm be registered for the poll-tax;<sup>285</sup> the poll-tax was imposed on the Christians in the year 951 (639–40).

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (641–42) The death of Heraclius and accession of Constans II<sup>286</sup>

Theophanes: In the month of March King Heraclius died of dropsy after a reign of thirty years and ten months. After him his son Constantine reigned four months and died after being poisoned by his stepmother Martina and the patriarch Pyrrhus. And so Heraclonas, Martina's son, became king together with his mother Martina. The Senate rejected Heraclonas together with his mother Martina and Valentinus.<sup>287</sup> They cut off Martina's tongue and the nose of Heraclonas and, having exiled them, placed on the throne Constans, son of Constantine and grandson of Heraclius, and he ruled for twenty-seven years.<sup>288</sup>

Agapius: Heraclius, king of the Romans, died after reigning for thirty-one years and five months... Then Constantine, son of Heraclius, reigned for four months in the year AG 953 (641–42). He was killed and Heraclius, son of Heraclius, reigned with his son for eighth months. He was then expelled from the rule and Constans reigned for twenty-seven years from the year AG 954. | Heraclius, king of the Romans, died after reigning for thirty-one years. He died on Sunday, 7 February, in the year AG 952 (640–41), year 19 of the Arabs (640)<sup>289</sup> and year 7 of 'Umar (641). Constantine, son of Heraclius,

<sup>285</sup> *Ksef rīshā*. Agapius uses the more general term *kharāj*.

<sup>286</sup> Theophanes, 341–42; Agapius, 454–55 | 478 | 478; MSyr 11.VII, 421/426; *Chron 1234*, 260. Nicephorus, §27, implies that Heraclius died in February AG 952/641.

<sup>287</sup> Valentinus began as a military officer in the entourage of the imperial treasurer Philagrius, but in the wake of the death of Heraclius and his son Constantine, Valentinus seems to have taken over political leadership of the army. He later launched a bid for the imperial office itself (see below). See *PLRE*, 'Valentinus 5'.

<sup>288</sup> On Heraclius' successors see *ODB*, 'Herakleios Constantine' (Feb–April 641), 'Heraklonas' (May–Sept 641), and 'Constans II' (641–68).

<sup>289</sup> AH 19 ran from January to December 640, so February 641 would have occurred in

reigned after him for four months. One of the wives of his father killed him. Then Heraclius, son of Heraclius, reigned for eight months. | The Romans augured evil from Heraclius son of Heraclius' enthronement and so deposed him. Thereafter Constans, son of Constantine, son of Heraclius, reigned for twenty-seven years, from the year AG 954.

MSyr: In the year AG 952, 19 of the Arabs and 7 of 'Umar, Heraclius died having reigned thirty years and five months. His son, Constantine, reigned together with Heraclius and the young Heraclius, who is called the new David. He was poisoned by Martina, the wife of (his father) Heraclius. She then crowned her son, the young Heraclonas. This displeased the senate, who deposed him and crowned Constans, son of Constantine.

*Chron 1234*: In the year AG 952, 19 of the Arabs and 7 of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, king of the Arabs, King Heraclius died having reigned thirty years and five months. After him his elder son, Constantine, reigned over the Romans for four months. He was poisoned by Martina, the illegitimate wife of his father, and he died. Heraclonas, son of Heraclius and born of the same Martina, reigned after him. This displeased the senate, who deposed him and crowned Constans, son of Constantine, son of Heraclius.

#### (640–41) The capture of Caesarea in Palestine<sup>290</sup>

Theophanes: Mu'awiya (Mauias) took Caesarea in Palestine after seven years' siege and killed 7000 Romans in it.

Agapius: The Arabs captured the city of Caesarea and Palestine.<sup>291</sup> | Mu'awiya

early AH 20, which does correspond to year 7 of 'Umar and AG 652. Christian chroniclers very often had problems with coordinating their own solar calendar with the Muslims' lunar one.

<sup>290</sup> Theophanes, 341; Agapius, 454 | 478; MSyr 11.VIII, 422–23/430–31; *Chron 1234*, 259. Note that MSyr and *Chron 1234* give surprisingly divergent accounts. In the light of MSyr's 'from the beginning of December to the month of May' Theophanes' seven years should probably be amended to seven months, although Baladhuri, 141 (and Ibn al-'Adim, 6.2861), says the siege lasted for seven years, apparently counting from an initial attempt in AH 13/634 by 'Amr ibn al-'As until the city's fall at the hands of Mu'awiya in either AH 19 or 20/640 or 641 (Caetani, *Annali*, 4.156–63). Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 151 (AG 953/641–42). See Gil, *History of Palestine*, 59; Donner, *Conquests*, 153–54.

<sup>291</sup> Since Caesarea was the capital of Palestine, it could be said that by capturing Caesarea the Arabs could claim to rule the whole of Palestine.



captured Caesarea, the (capital) city of Palestine, and killed 7000 Romans from it.

MSyr: The Arabs **ravaged** Caesarea in Palestine. Because of its adornment and the riches of Straton<sup>292</sup> it would be right to apply to it the same lamentations as for Jerusalem. Because the wise men who were there did not know the Lord and the old men did not understand His dispensation, its streets and squares were filled with wickedness. Young men and maidens committed abominations together. The cries of us who were governed unjustly rose to the ears of our Lord. For this reason the Lord called upon it (Caesarea) the fury of the Arabs. Mu'awiya encircled it by land and sea. From the beginning of December until May, by day and night, he waged war against it. They did not obtain a guarantee for their lives. Seventy-two siege engines continuously hurled stones, but the wall was not penetrated on account of its solidity. Finally they made a breach and some of them entered through it while others scaled the wall by ladders. They fought and were fought for three days, after which the Arabs overwhelmed the Romans. Of the **7000** of them who were **guarding it** (Caesarea) some escaped by boat. Mu'awiya **seized** much wealth and subjected its residents to **tribute**.

*Chron 1234:* Mu'awiya came to besiege the city of Caesarea. He launched against it a violent and vigorous assault, **ravaging** the surrounding country and taking captives from it. He sustained the hostilities by night and day for a long time. There were in the city **7000** Roman soldiers sent there to **guard it**. When he (Mu'awiya) subdued it (Caesarea) by the sword, he fought and killed all who were found in it. He **seized** and plundered vast quantities of gold and silver and then abandoned it to its grieving and lamentation. Those who settled there afterwards he made pay **tribute**.

#### The despoiling of Euchaita<sup>293</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

<sup>292</sup> Straton I of Sidon (reigned 376–61 BC), who founded the Hellenistic city of Stratonospyros, on the ruins of which Herod the Great built his city of Caesarea in the late first century BC.

<sup>293</sup> Agapius, 478 ('Umar 10/643–44); Msyr 11.VIII, 423/431, and *Chron* 1234, 259. Though Agapius' notice is very brief, it comes after the siege of Caesarea, as with Dionysius, and so plausibly refers to the same event. Euchaita is in the region of Pontus, on the southern side of the Black Sea; its ruins are found amid the modern town of Beyüzü in north central Turkey.

Agapius: The Arabs attacked a city of Cilicia, captured it and took many captives.

MSyr: **From there** (Caesarea)<sup>294</sup> they went up **to the heartlands of the Greeks**.<sup>295</sup> Mu'awiya was exhorting his troops, saying: 'We are going to a country that is full of gold and all kinds of riches; the Lord will deliver it into your hands because of the sins of its inhabitants.' They crossed into Cilicia, pillaging and **enslaving**. They arrived at Euchaita without anyone **noticing them**. All at once they (the Arabs) seized **its gates**. When Mu'awiya arrived, he ordered that all be killed and placed guards so that no one could escape. When he had collected all the wealth, he began to torture the leaders to reveal what was hidden. All the people – men, **women, boys and girls** – they enslaved and they caused much grief in this city, wickedly fornicating in the churches. Then, **exultant**, they went back **to their country**. These things happened in AG 951 (639–40).

*Chron 1234:* **From there** (Caesarea) Mu'awiya determined to go up **to the heartlands of the Romans**. He ravaged, **enslaved** and pillaged his way as far as Euchaita, which is *blstyn*.<sup>296</sup> No one in it (Euchaita) **noticed** them. The Euchaitans were scattered about the fields and vineyards. When they saw the troops, they thought that they were Christian Arabs, from those allied to the Romans. So no person fled or moved away. They (the Muslim Arabs) arrived at the unfortunate city, opening **its gates**, the people sitting around without any fear. Then they entered and took possession of the city and plundered it, piling up great mounds of booty. They seized the **women, boys and girls** to lead into captivity. Even the city governor<sup>297</sup> was taken prisoner. Thus they left it (Euchaita) devastated and deserted and returned, **exulting, to their country**.

<sup>294</sup> Dionysius places this notice immediately after the capture of Caesarea in Palestine, but perhaps there is some confusion with Caesarea in Cappadocia, which is at least reasonably near to Euchaita.

<sup>295</sup> The Aleppo manuscript of Msyr has *yawnāyē* ('Greeks'); Chabot miscopied it as *yūdāyē* ('Jews').

<sup>296</sup> Unidentified. Note that Bar Hebraeus, CS, 14, mentions "'*blstyn* which is in *kspwlys*' in connection with Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik's campaign that captured the fort of Turanda in AG 1022/710–11; *kspwlys* probably refers to the Hexapolis (see n. 398 below), though this is further south than Euchaita.

<sup>297</sup> *Arkhūnā*: from Greek *archōn*.



'Umar's building of the temple at Jerusalem'<sup>298</sup>

Theophanes: 'Umar started to build the temple at Jerusalem, but the structure would not stand and kept falling down. When he enquired after the cause of this, the Jews said: 'If you do not remove the cross that is above the church on the Mount of Olives,<sup>299</sup> the structure will not stand.' On this account the cross was removed from there and thus their building was steadied. For this reason Christ's enemies took down many crosses.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: **At this time, while the Arabs were building the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, the construction collapsed. The Jews said: 'If you do not take down the cross which is placed opposite the temple on the Mount of Olives, the temple will not be built.' As soon as they took down that cross, the construction stood firm.** By reason of this many crosses were removed and this is how it came about in the kingdom of the Arabs that they became enemies of the cross and opponents of the Christians, because of their worship of the cross.<sup>300</sup>

*Chron 1234*: **At this time the Arabs were building the temple in Jerusalem; the construction was damaged and collapsed.** When they sought to learn from the filthy Jews why this was happening, they (the Jews) said to them: 'Now if you do not take down that cross which is placed opposite the

<sup>298</sup> Theophanes, 342; MSyr 11.VIII, 421/431; *Chron 1234*, 260–61. Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 132–33. For early Muslim building on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem see Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 23–50; Kaplony, *The Haram of Jerusalem*, 25–31, 208–12; al-Tel, *First Islamic Conquest*, 133–207.

<sup>299</sup> This is the large bronze cross that Empress Eudokia, wife of Theodosius II (408–50), set up at the church of the Ascension, according to John Rufus, writing ca. 500 AD (Nau, 'Jean Rufus', 27). It is not noted by late seventh- and early eighth-century pilgrims such as Arculf and Willibald (though nor either by the Piacenza pilgrim of ca. 570), and so it is possible that it had been removed by the Muslims, though we know from Sebeos, 117, and Eutychius, 119, that the church of the Ascension had had to be restored after the attack of the Persians, and the cross may have been removed at that time and not been replaced.

<sup>300</sup> MSyr's comment, not found in *Chron 1234*, about a more widespread hostility to the cross may be his own addition. MSyr and *Chron 1234* also recount, presumably on the authority of Dionysius, how 'Amr (correctly 'Umayr) ibn Sa'd, governor of Damascus and Hims for 'Umar, allowed himself to be persuaded to ban public displays of crosses, which prompted some Jews to tear down crosses from churches, but a Christian companion of 'Amr ('Umayr) had him revoke the ban; they also tell how this 'Amr ('Umayr) commissioned the patriarch John to translate the Gospels into Arabic, which he did via learned men of the tribes of Tanukh, 'Aqulaye and Tu'aye. See Gil, *History of Palestine*, 65–73.

temple on the Mount of Olives, you will never succeed in building the temple.' As soon as they took down the cross, their construction was steadied.

Cf. *Chron Siirt* CIV, 624: 'Umar ordered that there be built in Jerusalem a mosque on the place of the tomb of Solomon son of David and a palace<sup>301</sup> next to it and then he left and he entrusted Syria to Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan. When they had built what 'Umar ordered, it fell down. They did it again, but when they had built it a second time, it fell down again. There was surprise at that. The Jews were asked about the reason for it and they said that if the cross placed on top of the Mount of Olives, opposite Syria, was not removed, then the building would not stay up. The Christians were asked to remove it; they obligingly took it down and the building was steadied. 'Umar was informed of this by letter and he was astonished.

(644) A solar eclipse<sup>302</sup>

Theophanes: An eclipse of the sun occurred on the fifth of the month of November, a Saturday, in the ninth hour.

Agapius: There was an eclipse of the sun on Friday, the first day of November.<sup>303</sup>

MSyr: The sun was eclipsed at the third hour on 29 October;<sup>304</sup> the stars could be seen. A great fear took hold of those who witnessed it.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

<sup>301</sup> *Qasr*: presumably meaning the early Islamic building complex that lies immediately to the south of the present Aqsa mosque. It is odd that *Chron Siirt* says tomb (*qabr*) of Solomon rather than temple.

<sup>302</sup> Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 479; MSyr 11.VIII, 421–22/432. Theophanes' date of 5/11/644 is confirmed by Schöve, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 123–24. Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius differ somewhat in their dating of this eclipse, but all place it right by the assassination of 'Umar I.

<sup>303</sup> Agapius has the right day (5 November 644 was a Friday), but the wrong date.

<sup>304</sup> Chabot translates '9 October', perhaps taking the 'b' before the *ʔ*'9' to be 'on' rather than '20'.



**The rebellion of Valentinus against Constans**<sup>305</sup>

Theophanes: The patrician Valentinus rebelled against Constans. The king gave orders for him to be killed and transferred his army to his own allegiance.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: The general Valentinus rebelled against the king and was killed. Those who had followed him submitted to the king.

**(644) The murder of 'Umar and accession of 'Uthman**<sup>306</sup>

Theophanes: 'Umar, the leader of the Saracens, was murdered on the 5th of the month of November by a certain Persian Muslim<sup>307</sup> who found him in prayer and pierced his stomach with a sword, thus depriving him of life after he had been emir twelve years. After him his kinsman 'Uthman ibn 'Affan (Outhman son of Phan) was appointed.<sup>308</sup>

Agapius: A man, known as Abu Lu'lu'a,<sup>309</sup> had designs on 'Umar; he remained lying in wait for him while he was standing praying. While he

<sup>305</sup> Theophanes, 343; *Chron 1234*, 260. A quite long account of this revolt is given by Sebeos, 142–43. See Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 156–58; Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos: Historical Commentary*, 250, 254–55; PMBZ, 'Valentinos' 8545.

<sup>306</sup> Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 479; MSyr 11.VIII, 421–22/430; *Chron 1234*, 261. Cf. *Chron 819*, 12 (AG 955/643–44); Caetani, *Chronographia*, 261–62, 273–74 (Dhu l-Hijja AH 23/November 644). See Anthony, 'The Assassination of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab', who argues convincingly that this account is based upon a Muslim source (see introduction above).

<sup>307</sup> *Hypo tinos persou magaritou*. The term *magarītēs* (or *mōagarītēs*) is a rendering in Greek of the Arabic word *muhājir*, meaning émigré, referring to those Arabs who had emigrated from Arabia to participate in the Islamic conquests. Here one could either translate it as 'Muslim' or as 'apostate'; the sense would be the same, but the latter is derogatory and emphasises the person's status as a renegade from their original religion (which probably fits Theophanes' intention better). See Kahane, 'Magariten' and n. 379 below.

<sup>308</sup> The third caliph of the Muslims; he reigned AH 23–35/644–56; see EI, 'Uthman b. 'Affan'; Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, 78–140.

<sup>309</sup> Thus he is called by Muslim writers, who say that he was originally from Nihawand (so, as Theophanes says, a Persian), but was taken captive by the Romans during their wars against the Persians, whereupon he would seem to have become a Christian (Tabari, 1.2632, 2722). He was then captured by the Muslims and served Mughira ibn Shu'ba, governor of Basra, as a craftsman; Theophanes implies that he became a Muslim.

('Umar) did his prostration, he (Abu Lu'lu'a) pierced him a number of times and so killed him. He died after having reigned for twelve years. 'Uthman ibn 'Affan then reigned for eleven years from AG 958 (646–47).<sup>310</sup>

MSyr: 'Umar the king of the Arabs, after reigning for twelve years, was killed in this way: a slave, a metalworker by trade, when mistreated by his Qurayshite master, went before 'Umar and complained about his owner several times. Then, either because he was busy with the administration of the kingdom or due to forgetfulness, he paid no heed. That slave became enraged at the king and, while he ('Umar) was praying, he (the slave) struck him with a dagger in the stomach and he died. 'Uthman began to reign in AG 955 (643–44).

*Chron 1234*: 'Umar the king of the Arabs, after reigning for twelve years, was killed on 4 November, a Thursday. The reason for his killing was that a certain Roman slave, belonging to one of the Quraysh, became upset at his master, who mistreated him,<sup>311</sup> and several times he complained about him (his master) to 'Umar. Then that king, either because he was busy with the administration of the kingdom or due to forgetfulness, paid no heed to him. Thereupon that slave attacked 'Umar while he was praying in the mosque; he struck him with a dagger in the stomach and ripped it open and in due course he died.

Cf. *Chron 819*, 12: King 'Umar was killed by the Indian slave of a Qurayshite man while he was praying in the mosque.

*Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §21: While the chiefs of his army were carrying off the triumph of victory over all parts, namely of the east and the west, 'Umar was killed<sup>312</sup> while at prayer by a certain slave after completing ten years of his reign.

<sup>310</sup> This date is wrong (it should be AG 956/644–45) because Agapius has allotted twelve years of rule to 'Umar instead of ten.

<sup>311</sup> Palmer, WSC, 168, translates this as 'sexually abused', elsewhere explaining his choice of words by the oddity of a slave expecting the supreme ruler to do anything about mistreatment of a slave ('Syriac Minor Chronicles', n. 238). However, one should bear in mind that most of those who served as slaves in early Islamic society were free-born (even elite) members of their society, from which they had then been wrenched in the course of the Arab conquests, and many would very likely have considered the Arabs as their inferiors.

<sup>312</sup> *Occisus est*; *Chron Hispanic 754*, §10, has instead 'he was struck by the sword' (*verberatus est gladio*).



**(684) The rebellion of Gregory in Africa**<sup>313</sup>

Theophanes: Gregory, the patrician of Africa, raised a rebellion together with the Africans. | The Saracens invaded Africa and, after joining battle with the rebel Gregory, routed him, slew his followers and drove him out of Africa. Having laid a tribute on the Africans they returned home.

Agapius: Gregory, the Roman patrician who was in Africa, rebelled (against Constans). The Arabs attacked Alexandria, in which was Manuel, a patrician of the Romans. He and his men fled, taking to the sea, and they went to (the land of) the Romans. The Arabs conquered Alexandria and destroyed its wall; they took control of it and of the coast between Alexandria and Pelusium (al-Farama). Then the Arabs raided Africa in this year and encountered there the Roman patrician Gregory. They defeated him and killed his men. Gregory made it to (the land of the) Romans and made peace.

MSyr: **Gregory, patrician of Africa, rebelled against Constans. In the same year the Arabs set out to invade Africa. They joined battle with the patrician and many from his army were killed. The Arabs returned and established their rule over all the cities of the coast. Gregory returned to make obeisance to King Constans.**

*Chron 1234*: **Gregory, the patrician of Africa, rebelled against him (Constans). In the same year the Arabs invaded Africa and encountered this Gregory, who had rebelled against the king. They joined battle with him and many from his armies were slaughtered. Gregory himself got away safely; he went off to make obeisance to the king.**

**A violent gale**<sup>314</sup>

Theophanes: A violent wind blew upon the earth. It uprooted many plants and tore up huge trees, roots and all, and threw down many columns of stylites.

<sup>313</sup> Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 479; MSyr 11.X, 428/440–41 (AG 958/646–47 and AH 25/645–46); *Chron 1234*, 260. Agapius is referring to the Arab re-conquest of Alexandria, after the Byzantines regained it in 646. Ibn Khayyat, 134, places the encounter between Gregory (*Jarjir*) and the Arabs, led by 'Abdallah ibn Abi Sarh, ca. 70 miles from Qayrawan in the year AH 27 (probably spring or summer, and so 648). See Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 159–60; *PLRE*, 'Gregorius 19'.

<sup>314</sup> Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 480; MSyr 11.X, 429/445; *Chron 1234*, 260, who places it next to the notice (cited above) on the collapse of the Arabs' construction on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, perhaps implying a link between the two events.

Agapius: There was a violent wind which uprooted large trees and ruined crops and vines and destroyed many abodes of solitaires.

MSyr: There was a **violent gale and trees were uprooted and columns of holy men fell down.**

*Chron 1234*: **A violent gale uprooted great trees and cast down many columns of holy men from their places.**

**(649–50) The capture of Cyprus**<sup>315</sup>

Theophanes: Mu'awiya invaded Cyprus by sea. He had 1700 ships and took (the capital city of) Constantia and the whole island, which he laid waste.

Agapius: The Arabs captured Cyprus and ruled it. | Mu'awiya sailed on the sea and headed for Cyprus and conquered it. With him were 1700 ships filled with weapons and riches. From it and the islands around it he took captive a large body of people.

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron 1234*.

*Chron 1234*: In the year AG 960 (648–49) the sons of Hagar made up their minds to have the island of Cyprus. The emir Mu'awiya issued the command and innumerable ships were assembled, as well as many smaller boats, and he moored them all along the coast. He also conveyed to the general at Alexandria that he, too, should send ships and a large army from Egypt. As soon as he received the letter from Mu'awiya, he dispatched the ships bearing a large army in support of the emir Mu'awiya, and slowly they set off. Now the two fleets had mingled and the sea came to resemble a forest from the huge number of ships, concealing a large area of the water surface. They began hoisting their sails, like lofty mountains, and it was as if the abyss were being shaken to its very foundations. They say that, all together, 1700 boats set off and in a single massive movement the voyage was begun. Those

<sup>315</sup> Theophanes, 343–44; Agapius, 455 (Constans, year 6/646–47) | 480 ('Uthman, year 3/646–47); MSyr 11.X, 429–30/441–42; *Chron 1234*, 268–72. For Dionysius I cite the text of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 173–77, but adapted by me as Palmer is very free in parts), which is fuller than, but close to, that of MSyr. See Conrad, 'The Conquest of Arwad'. Two inscriptions from Soloi confirm that there were two Arab campaigns against Cyprus and date them to 649 and 650 (Tinh, *Soloi*, 116ff.). The figure of 1700 ships for the Arab fleet given by all three writers confirms they are all using TC, but whether Theophanes and Agapius are massively abbreviating it or Dionysius enormously amplifying it is difficult to say.



watching from the shore were awe-struck at the size of the fleet, under which the waves of the sea were all but invisible. Brave and gallant were the marines who stood on the top-decks in the full finery of their fighting gear, boasting that they were going to destroy the luxurious (capital) city of the Cypriots, which had never been subjected to any plunderer or avenger.

When they came up to it, and were not far distant from it, Mu'awiya, the head of the army, ordered them to lower the sails and to maintain the ships just short of dry land. He wanted to use clemency towards the lords of the island, so he gave them this chance to be subjected on the receipt of guarantees of safety instead of letting their country be ruined by enemy aggression. He positioned his own ship at the head of the whole fleet and said to his companions: 'Let us stay here and see whether the Cypriots will come out to us to make a peace agreement so that they will live and their country and its citizens be spared from ruin.' One day passed and then another; but no one came to sue for peace or to beg them not to ruin the island. Mu'awiya became enraged enough to seek the destruction of the wretched people (of Cyprus). Moreover, the Egyptian contingent put him under considerable pressure with their hostile recriminations and their angry insults because he had delayed and had held them back from an invasion of the island. At last he yielded to the recriminations of the Alexandrians, being no longer able to resist their impetuosity, and ordered them suddenly to launch the invasion of the island.

When the Cypriots lifted up their eyes and saw the large number of ships, the poor people thought they were Romans coming to them by sea. Thus, when the Arabs reached land, they dropped anchor, moored their ships, armed themselves powerfully and came ashore (without any opposition).<sup>316</sup> They scattered throughout the island, spoiling, enslaving and killing without pity. Mu'awiya himself, with his chiefs and loyal retinue, made straight for the famous (city of) Constantia, which was the capital of the whole country. Once they had reached the city, as had been their desire, they found her prosperously settled and provided with amenities, full to overflowing with every race of people under the sun. Mu'awiya saw its riches and marvelled at its public places<sup>317</sup> and his heart swelled at (the sight of) so many edifices. He was puffed up with pride and exultant in his mind on seeing these treasures and riches all available without a battle or contest. Once the city had been

<sup>316</sup> This is the implication anyway of the initial statement that the Cypriots thought the ships belonged to the Romans and so did not suspect any imminent danger.

<sup>317</sup> *Pālāwātā*: plural of *pālīyā* (from Greek *plateia*) rather than plural of *pālāḥin* (from Greek *palation*), as Palmer assumes.

subdued by destruction and plunder, he established his camp in the bishop's residence, where the chief priests of the church lived, rested and received visitors.<sup>318</sup> Mu'awiya entered with due ceremony and, after resting as much as he wanted, he satisfied his unlawful lust within it...<sup>319</sup>

The barbarian force had scattered throughout the land, as I said before, to collect gold, slaves and expensive clothing and to bring it to the general Mu'awiya in Constantia, who was absolutely delighted, as were his companions, at the quantity of the accumulated loot and of the captives, male and female of every age. The gold and silver along with everything else was divided into two portions, for which the two armies, that from Egypt and that from Syria, cast lots. After a few days, when they felt they had stayed long enough, they embarked their human loot on the ships. What misery and lamentation were seen then! Fathers were separated from their children, daughters from their mothers, brother from brother, some destined for Alexandria, others for Syria. The return passage of the invaders was smooth and calm.

Evidently the Lord had fixed this island with a baleful stare, not to do good there, but to make it a byword and a curse among all nations. Shortly afterwards he stirred the barbarians up to invade Cyprus again, under a commander called Abu l-A'war.<sup>320</sup> They had heard that it was already as full of people as ever and that a large force of Romans had taken up residence there. The vessels were ready, the Arab forces embarked, and the journey began on a calm and tranquil sea. Meanwhile, the Roman force on the island encouraged the populace, which had emerged from its hiding-places in the caves and mountains, to have confidence. 'Stay where you are', they said, raising false hopes, 'Do not panic, there is no need to worry!' But when the Romans and natives actually sighted the Arab ships on the horizon and saw their number, their courage deserted them and they took to flight. Some, who

<sup>318</sup> Palmer omits this clause ('where... visitors') since it appears superfluous; presumably the author wants to emphasise the contrast between the proper use of the building and the improper use made of it by Mu'awiya.

<sup>319</sup> A long paragraph ensues in which Dionysius poses the question: 'Why did God allow this to occur?', and gives a lengthy answer to the effect that 'those who had held office in that place had been unworthy heirs and bad servants' and that 'the priests, who were themselves the trustees of the law, were strangers to the Lord', and he concludes: 'That is why the cup of God's wrath which was filled to the brim with this ordure, was flung over the deflowered city.'

<sup>320</sup> This is the general Abu l-A'war ibn Sufyan al-Sulami, known to Muslim sources as the governor of Jordan in the time of 'Uthman (Tabari, 1.3057) and a close ally of the caliph Mu'awiya, leading the troops of the province of Jordan against 'Ali at the battle of Siffin. See EI, 'Abu l-A'war' and *PMBZ*, 'Abu l-A'war' 71.



were rich, possessed sailing vessels in which they escaped to Roman territory. Others attempted to avoid death or slavery by shutting themselves up in Lapathos,<sup>321</sup> one of the cities on Cyprus. As for the Romans, on whom the islanders had depended, when they saw that their own lives were in danger, they took to their own ships and saved themselves from Arab aggression. As soon as the ships were ashore, the invaders filled all mountains and the plains, intent on plunder and slaves. They winkled the natives out of the cracks in the ground, like eggs abandoned in the nest. The general, Abu l-A'war, went down to Constantia and stayed there for forty days, enslaving the population and eating the livestock head by head. At length when they had had their way with the rest of the island, they all gathered against Lapathos. For several days they tried the effect of promises of peace, but finding the Cypriots unreceptive to these, they began eventually to bombard the city with catapults from all around. When the inhabitants saw that it was hopeless and that no help was on its way, they petitioned the general to give them a pledge that their lives would be saved. He showed clemency readily and sent them the following instructions: 'The gold and silver and other assets which are in the city are mine. To you I give a peace agreement and a solemn pact that those of you who so wish may go to Roman territory, and that those who wish to stay will neither be killed nor enslaved.' Thus the city was taken, its treasures were loaded onto the ships with the rest of the booty, and the Arabs sailed back to Syria in victory.

#### The capture of Arwad<sup>322</sup>

Theophanes: On hearing that the chamberlain Kakorizos<sup>323</sup> was moving against him with a great Roman force, he (Mu'awiya) sailed away to Arwad (Arados) and, after putting in his fleet, attempted to capture, with the help of various engines, the little town called Kastellos<sup>324</sup> on that island. Meeting with no success, he sent to the inhabitants a certain bishop called Thomas<sup>325</sup>

321 This is Turkish Lapta, on the north-western coast of Cyprus.

322 Theophanes, 344; Agapius, 480–81; Msyr 11.X, 430/442; *Chron* 1234, 273. See Conrad, 'Conquest of Arwad'. The island of Arwad, ancient Arados, is about 2 miles off the Syrian coast.

323 See *PMBZ* 'Kakorizos' 3579.

324 This name presumably just reflects the fact that the town possessed strong walls like a castle.

325 Presumably the same as Thomas bishop of Apamea, whose death is reported at Theophanes, 348. See *PMBZ*, 'Thomarikos' 8400.

(Thomarichos) to frighten them into abandoning the town, submitting to terms and leaving the island. When the bishop had come in to meet them, they held him inside and did not yield to Mu'awiya. The siege of Arwad having thus proved fruitless, he returned to Damascus, since the winter had set in. (The next year) Mu'awiya set out against Arwad with a great armament and took it by capitulation on condition that its inhabitants could dwell wherever they wished. He burned the town, destroyed its walls and caused the island to be uninhabited to this day.

Agapius: Mu'awiya heard that Roman armies were despatched against him, so he returned to Syria and besieged Arwad. He made every effort but could not take it. He therefore sent a bishop called Thomas to ask them to move off the island and to go to the Romans so that the Arabs could settle on it. When the bishop came to them, they imprisoned him and did not allow him to return to Mu'awiya and paid no attention to his message. Then Mu'awiya returned to Damascus because it was the beginning of winter and it (Arwad) was by the sea. But when winter was spent and spring arrived, Mu'awiya returned to the island of Arwad with troops mightier and more numerous than the first time. He besieged it and their circumstances became very straitened. When the people of Arwad saw the difficulty they were in and the military might opposing them, they requested a guarantee of safety on the condition that they could go to Syria and settle wherever they liked. Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan gave his full consent to them and so they departed from it (Arwad). When they had left, Mu'awiya ordered its walls to be destroyed, so they were razed and burned to the ground.

MSyr: After these events (the attacks on Cyprus) Mu'awiya (proceeded to) **the city of Arwad, which is an island. When Mu'awiya had besieged it but was unable to capture it, he sent a bishop (named) Thomas (to request of the inhabitants) that they leave the city and depart in peace. Since they were unwilling (to do so), Mu'awiya returned to Damascus. When spring arrived, Mu'awiya came again against Arwad and besieged it. This time all the people left and Mu'awiya destroyed it so that it would not be settled again.**

*Chron* 1234: **The city of Arwad, which is called Arad Constantini, is an island in the sea situated opposite Antaradus and separated from it by some three miles.<sup>326</sup> When Mu'awiya was unable to capture it by force, he sent a certain bishop to them, by the name of Thomas, to request of them**

326 Antaradus is modern Tartus on the Mediterranean coast of Syria.



(Arwad's inhabitants) that **they leave the city and go and depart in peace**. But when the bishop entered before them, they seized him and would not allow him to leave; moreover, they did not surrender to Mu'awiya. When this happened, **Mu'awiya returned to Damascus**, for winter had now begun and it was impossible to attack the city in winter time. Once **spring arrived**, however, **Mu'awiya renewed the assault against Arwad** with troops more numerous and better equipped than before. When the citizens of Arwad saw their present predicament and the mighty forces that Mu'awiya had arrayed against their city, they accepted guarantees of security for their lives, with some of them going to Roman territory and others **leaving** for Syria, wherever they wished to reside. When the inhabitants of the island city had departed, **Mu'awiya ordered its walls to be destroyed** and the city to be set on fire and razed to the ground. They did this to the city so that it would never again be built or **be settled**.

**(651–52) The death of the Persian king Yazdgird<sup>327</sup>**

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: 'Uthman ibn 'Affan sent his son Sa'id<sup>328</sup> with many troops in pursuit of Yazdgird, the king of the Persians, who was at that time in Sijistan. When he heard that Sa'id was coming after him, he fled from Sijistan to Merw,<sup>329</sup> where he remained for two years. Sa'id took all the cities of Khurasan by submission, organising his governors over them, and finally reached Merw where Yazdgird was staying. When Yazdgird became aware of this, he was afraid lest its people, that is, the people of the city, would surrender him, and so he left it by night. He hid in a mill on a river by the gate of the city. The owner of the mill discovered him and smashed his head and took it to Sa'id.

327 Agapius, 481; Msyr 11.VIII, 422/430 (AG 961/649–50); *Chron* 1234, 273–74. Cf. Sebeos, 163–64, speaking of year 11 of Constans/651–52; *Chron Khuzistan*, 30–31; *Chron Siirt* XCIV, 581; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 329 (AH 31/651–52); *El*, 'Yazdadjird'. Many of the ingredients of this account – Yazdgird fleeing to Merw, hiding in a mill, being killed by either the mill owner or a Turkish leader – are also found in Muslim sources (see Caetani, *Annali*, 7.437–52).

328 Probably Sa'id ibn al-'As ibn Abi Uhayha is meant here; he was a nephew of 'Uthman, rather than a son, and was his governor in Kufa for a while.

329 Sijistan, or Sistan, was a province of the Sasanian Persian Empire that would now be divided between modern south-east Iran and south-west Afghanistan. Merw was capital of the large province of Khurasan and now lies just north of the modern Iranian border in Turkmenistan.

The latter conquered Merw and took the crown of the Persian king, namely Yazdgird, and his head and brought them to his father. 'Uthman ibn 'Affan went and placed the crown in the sacred house, where it remains until today.

MSyr: King 'Uthman sent his son Sa'id to pursue Yazdgird, the king of the Persians. Having been in hiding for five years in Sijistan, he came out and went to Merw.<sup>330</sup> Sa'id, when he had subjected all the cities, came to Merw. Yazdgird, fearing lest they (the people of Merw) would hand him over, went out and hid in a mill. A Turkish man found him and killed him there and brought out his head to the governor of the city. The latter, seeing that his king was killed, surrendered the city to the Arabs. Sa'id took the royal crown of the Persians and sent it to 'Uthman. The latter sent it to the Ka'ba, where it is now.<sup>331</sup>

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330 Msyr's text has Kufa, but the sense requires Merw and *Chron* 1234 and all the other sources have Merw.

331 Msyr renders Ka'ba as *k'btā*, *Chron* 1234 as *kā'bh*; the term refers to the black stone in Mecca that is the focus of the Muslim pilgrimage. Msyr 11.VII, 418/424, continues: 'When Yazdgird, king of the Persians, was killed, whether by the Arabs or by the Turks, the empire and dynasty of the Persian realm, called the House of Sasan, disappeared completely. It had lasted for 418 years. It began in AG 538 with Ardashir son of Babak and ended in AG 956 with this Yazdgird, the last king, in the time of Heraclius, king of the Romans, and 'Umar ibn Khattab, king of the Arabs.'



**(650–51) Constans sues for peace**<sup>332</sup>

Theophanes: King Constans sent a certain Procopius as ambassador to Mu'awiya to ask for peace, which was concluded for two years. Mu'awiya was given Gregory, son of (Heraclius' brother) Theodore, as a hostage at Damascus. | (The next year) Gregory, nephew of Heraclius, died at Baalbek (Heliopolis).<sup>333</sup> His body was embalmed and brought to Constantinople.

Agapius: Constans, king of the Romans, sent messengers to Mu'awiya in Damascus asking for a peace treaty. Among them was the ambassador Manuel, who had been in Egypt, together with a number of Romans. Mu'awiya accepted that on the condition that he (Constans) leave behind with him (Mu'awiya) a few of his (Constans') own family as hostages.

MSyr: As the Arabs were again preparing to attack Constantinople, Ptolemy came to promise to give every year the tribute of the country of the Romans. When he deceived them, the Arabs went up and pillaged Isauria. Ptolemy went out again, gave gold and made a **peace treaty** with the Arabs for three years. The king (Constans) sent **Gregory, his brother's son**,<sup>334</sup> as a **hostage** to Mu'awiya (in guarantee) for the gold.

*Chron 1234*: Constans sent a messenger to Mu'awiya, the emir of Syria who was in Damascus, for the purpose of a **peace treaty**. Once a peace treaty had been drawn up between them, the Arabs received a **hostage** (in guarantee) for the treaty from Constans, (namely) **Gregory, son of Theodore**,<sup>335</sup> **brother of Heraclius**. The following year, however, this Gregory died. They (the Arabs) embalmed his body and sent it to Constantinople and the treaty was annulled.

332 Theophanes, 344 | 345; Agapius, 481; MSyr 11.XI, 432/446; *Chron 1234*, 274. Cf. Sebeos, 147; Fredegar, 162 ('for three years and more Constans paid 1000 gold coins a day to the Saracens'). See Kaegi, *Byzantine Military Unrest*, 160. If the peace lasted for three years, as the majority of sources suggest, then it must have begun by 651, since Sebeos, 170–71, tells us there was a major Arab–Byzantine naval confrontation in year 13 of Constans (AD 654); see Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos: Historical Commentary*, 260–61.

333 Gregory's death is only mentioned by Theophanes and *Chron 1234*. Sebeos, 147, and *Chron Zuqnin*, 152, agree with Theophanes that the envoy was Procopius; MSyr has Ptolemy (but his account seems to relate to the earlier notice about Ptolemy and 'Iyad ibn Ghanm) and Agapius has Manuel, which is probably a mistake for Procopius, though could conceivably be the same Manuel as was sent to Egypt by Heraclius (see the notice on the conquest of Egypt above and Ibn Khayyat, 133). See further PMBZ, 'Gregorius' 2346, 'Prokopius' 6354, 'Manuel' 4697.

334 Or rather, as Theophanes and *Chron 1234* says, Heraclius' nephew.

335 As always in MSyr and *Chron 1234*, Theodoric for Theodore.

**(652–53) The rebellion of the Armenian patrician Pasagnathes**<sup>336</sup>

Theophanes: Pasagnathes, the patrician of Armenia, rebelled against the king and made a treaty with Mu'awiya, to whom he handed his own son. On hearing this, the king went as far as Cappadocian Caesarea and, giving up all hope for Armenia, came back.

Agapius: The people of Armenia shook off obedience to Constans, king of the Romans, and submitted to the Muslims. Their governor was a Roman patrician called Pasagnathes; he corresponded with Mu'awiya and sent him his son as hostage. When Constans heard that the people of Armenia had mutinied, he set out with Roman troops and went to Caesarea in Cappadocia, heading for Armenia. While he was on his way, news of it (the Armenians' submission to the Muslims) came to him and grieved him. He had intended to enter Armenia, but now he turned back despairing of (holding) it.

Dionysius: not recorded

**The capture of Rhodes**<sup>337</sup>

Theophanes: Mu'awiya took Rhodes and cast down the Colossus of Rhodes 1360 years after its erection. It was bought by a Jewish merchant of Edessa, who loaded the bronze on 900 camels.

Agapius: Mu'awiya sent troops to the island of Rhodes. They took it, organised its amenities and made it a lookout for the Arabs. There was a statue in it which they destroyed some 360 years after its erection. Its length was fifty cubits. The Arabs took it out and threw it into the sea. This took place in year eight of 'Uthman (651–52).

MSyr: Abu I-A'war and his army set off by sea and arrived at the island of Cos. By the treachery of the bishop there they captured it, plundered and

336 Theophanes, 344; Agapius, 482 ('Uthman 4/647–48). See Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos: Historical Commentary*, 266–72, and Peeters, 'Pasagnathes-Persogenes', who thinks that this notice concerns the Armenian prince Theodore Rshtuni's conclusion of peace with Mu'awiya in year 12 of Constans/652–53 (cf. Sebeos, 164). This identification is accepted by PMBZ, which in its entry for Pasagnathes refers one directly to 'Theodoros Rštuni' 7293.

337 Theophanes, 345; Agapius, 482; MSyr 11.X, 430/442–43. Agapius places this in year 8 of 'Uthman (652–53) and MSyr in AG 965/653–54. It seems unlikely that the colossus, erected in 304–293 BC and deemed one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was still standing by this time; for discussion see Conrad, 'The Arabs and the Colossus'.



looted all its wealth, massacred the population, leading the survivors away as captives, and destroyed its citadel. He crossed to Crete and pillaged it. Then they went to Rhodes and destroyed it. It had a colossus of bronze which was very impressive; it was said to be one of the great wonders of the world. They decided to break it and take away the bronze. It was of Corinthian bronze and in the likeness of a man standing. When they set fire to its base, they realised that by great (metal) stakes it was fixed to stones within the earth. By great ropes many men pulled on it and suddenly it was uprooted and fell to the ground. They say that its height was 107 feet. 3000 loads of brass were carried off and were sold to a Jewish man from the city of Hims.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (652) The Arabs invade Armenia<sup>338</sup>

Theophanes: Habib (Abibos), the Arab general, invaded Armenia and, having encountered Maurianus, the Roman general, pursued him as far as the mountains of the Caucasus and devastated the country.

Agapius: The (Arab) commander entered Armenia with many troops, conquered it and killed all the Romans who were there.

MSyr: Mu'awiya, head of the army of the Arabs, divided his troops into two camps. Over one of them he appointed as head Habib, a wicked Syrian man, and sent him to Armenia in the month of Tishrin.<sup>339</sup> When they arrived, they found the land was full of snow. They came up with the plan of bringing bulls and making them go on ahead of them to tread down the path. Thus they forged ahead unimpeded by the snow. The Armenians, who had not foreseen this, were caught unawares. The Arabs began to ravage and plunder; they took people captive and burned villages. Then they returned to their country exultant.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

338 Theophanes, 345; Agapius, 483; MSyr 11.X, 428/441 (who explains this as a joint campaign, the other half of the army marching with Mu'awiya against Cappadocian Caesarea and Armorium). Habib ibn Maslama al-Fihri is known to Muslim sources as the conqueror of Armenia; cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 330 (AH 31/652); the next year he campaigned in northern Mesopotamia (*ibid.*, 338; *Chron Zuqnin*, 152 (AG 964/652–53); Sebeos, 171–72).

339 Either October (Tishrin I) or November (Tishrin II).

#### (654–55) The naval battle of Phoenix<sup>340</sup>

Theophanes: Mu'awiya commanded that a great navy armament should be made with a view to his fleet's sailing against Constantinople. The entire preparation was being made at Tripoli in Phoenicia. On seeing this, two Christ-loving brothers, sons of a trumpeter, who lived in Tripoli, were fired with a divine zeal and rushed to the city prison, where there was a multitude of Roman captives. They broke down the gates and, after liberating the captives, rushed to the governor of the city, whom they slew together with his retinue and, having burned all the equipment, sailed off to the Roman state. Even so, the preparation was not abandoned; and while Mu'awiya made an expedition against Caesarea of Cappadocia, he appointed Abu l-A'war (Aboulawar) chief of the said shipbuilding. This man arrived at Phoenix,<sup>341</sup> as it is called, in Lycia, where King Constans lay with that Roman fleet, and engaged him in a sea battle. As the king was about to fight on sea he saw in a dream that night that he was at Thessalonica. When he had awakened, he related his vision to an interpreter of dreams, who said: 'Would, O king, that you had had not fallen asleep or seen a dream, for your being at Thessalonica is interpreted as "give victory to another",<sup>342</sup> that is, victory will go to your enemy.' Now the king, who had taken no measures to draw up his battle line, ordered the Roman fleet to fight. When the two sides engaged, the Romans were defeated and the sea was dyed with Roman blood. The king then put his robes on another man and the aforesaid trumpeter's son leaped into the

340 Theophanes, 345–46; Agapius, 483–84 (AH 34/654–55); MSyr 11.XI, 430–32/445–46 (AG 966/654–55 and AH 35/655–56; *Chron 1234*, 274–75 (AG 966, AH 37/657–58). Sebeos records two naval campaigns launched by Mu'awiya: the first (*ibid.*, 147) he depicts as a victory for Constans, though it must in reality have been a close fight, since it worried Constans enough for him to sue for peace *ca.* 650–51; the second (*ibid.*, 170–71), in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Constans (653–54), was a disaster for the Muslims due to an enormous storm that destroyed their fleet. Muslim sources recount a naval battle known as that of the masts (*al-ṣawārī*) that ended in a Muslim victory, though they say very many died on both sides, so it was evidently a close call. Although many Muslim sources date it to AH 34/654–55 (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 360), some do prefer AH 31/651–52 (e.g. Tabari, 1.2865), which might reflect Sebeos' two campaigns. See Caetani, *Annali*, 8.92–103; Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 3.271–73, nn. VI–IX; Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos: Historical Commentary*, 260–61; O'Sullivan, 'Sebeos' Account'; Zuckermann, 'Learning from the Enemy', 114–17.

341 Modern Finike, on the southern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, near Antalya.

342 *Thes allō nikēn*: a play on the sound of the words and not the real meaning of the name Thessalonica, but it may mean that the original account was in Greek. The negative interpretation of Constans' dream is meant as a slight against his support for the Monothelistic heresy (the belief that God had one will, rather than two wills).



imperial ship and, snatching the king away, transferred him to another ship, thus saving him unexpectedly. This courageous man then stationed himself bravely on the imperial ship and killed many of the enemy before giving up his life on behalf of the king. The enemy surrounded him and held him in their midst, thinking he was the king. After he had slain many of them, they killed him too, as the man who was wearing the imperial robes. Thus routed, the king escaped and, leaving everyone behind, sailed off to Constantinople.

Agapius: Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan prepared to advance on Constantinople by sea in year 9 of 'Uthman, 34 of the Arabs, 13 of Constans, king of the Romans.<sup>343</sup> He readied many ships at the city of Tripoli on the sea coast and brought a huge amount of weapons. When they were loaded aboard and they were resolved to launch their attack, two brothers of a man called the trumpeter,<sup>344</sup> who worked for the Arabs at Tripoli, became irritated and enraged on seeing these preparations of Mu'awiya. They went to the prison, opened it and let out all the Romans who were in it. They attacked the governor of the city and killed him. They burned the ships and the equipment; then they took to the sea and went to (the land of) the Romans. When that reached Mu'awiya, he readied many troops to go to (the land of) the Romans and they conquered the country of Bzntya<sup>345</sup> and Melitene. They reached the fort of al-Murra, near the gate of Melitene, and took captive 100,000 of its people. He (Mu'awiya) despatched a man called Abu l-A'war<sup>346</sup> with a large army and he came to Phoenix on the Lycian coast and caused much damage. Then Constans went out to him with the Roman army and dispatched his brother Theodosius<sup>347</sup> by sea with numerous ships. They met and fought.

343 The same synchronism is found in *Chron 1234*, who adds AG 966, which corresponds to 654–55 and to AH 34 and 13 of Constans, but year 9 of 'Uthman corresponds to 652–53. MSyr has AG 966 and 9 of 'Uthman, but differs from *Chron 1234* in equating them (wrongly) to year 10 of Constans (650–51) and AH 35 (655–56).

344 *Bqfr*: presumably deriving from Greek *boukinatoros* 'trumpeter' (thus in Theophanes), which Agapius seems to take as a personal name. Note that he speaks of brothers rather than sons of the trumpeter.

345 This is what Vasiliev gives; the sense would require the name of a place near Melitene.

346 Agapius has Abu l-'Ud; the mistake probably arose from the fact that 'd' and 'r' are only distinguishable by a dot in Syriac. This is one of a number of indications that Agapius is either himself translating from Syriac or relying on a translation from Syriac. Note that what is rendered in this sentence as Phoenix and Lycia appears in the manuscript as Brnyqyh and Byqyh; Vasiliev emends this in the text to Fwnyqyh and Lyqyh.

347 Vasiliev and the manuscript have Yāqūt, but one should perhaps read Tādūs, since presumably Constans' younger brother, Theodosius, is intended here (he is specifically named by Dionysius). See *PMBZ*, 'Theodosios' 7797.

When the two parties engaged, defeat befell the Romans and Constans was almost drowned. He only escaped after so many Romans had been killed that the sea had turned to blood. The Arabs returned with much booty and Constans went to Sicily.

MSyr: Mu'awiya prepared ships to make a naval raid against Constantinople, the imperial city. Then two men, (fired) with zeal, let out the prisoners confined in Tripoli, where the ships were moored. Having killed the Arabs and the emir, they set fire to the whole fleet. They themselves set sail in a small boat and fled to the land of the Romans. Mu'awiya, commander-in-chief of the Arabs, having learned what had happened, was extremely angry. He assembled even more numerous armies and readied ships. He had sent at the head of the army Abu l-A'war and they marched to the place called Phoenix. King Constans came to meet them with his brother Theodosius. Once they were ready for the following day, when they would do battle with the Arabs, the king slept, and he saw in a dream that he was in Thessalonica. He told his dream to an interpreter of dreams, who replied to him: 'Would that you had not slept and seen this dream, O king; Thessalonica is to be explained as *thes allo tēn nikēn*, that is, give the victory to another; that is to say, victory favours your enemies.' However, the king scorned the interpreter of dreams and waged a naval battle on the sea, which indeed was a victory for the Arabs and a defeat for the Romans. The king was nearly captured, but for the fact that the son of the trumpeter jumped onto the royal ship and had the king cross to another vessel so that he was saved. He (the trumpeter's son) remained on the royal ship and, having killed a great number (of the enemy), was killed himself finally. The battle was so fierce that it was said that dense smoke<sup>348</sup> rose up among the ships like dust from dry ground. While King Constans and his brother fled to the royal city, the Roman army was cut to pieces. The battle abated and died down. Abu l-A'war, general of the Arabs, ordered that they bring up the corpses, which were floating on the water like poles; their number amounted to as much as 20,000.

*Chron 1234*: Mu'awiya, the emir of Syria and Damascus, equipped a great fleet to sail to Constantinople and lay siege to it. These preparations were made on the coast at the city of Tripoli. When a huge force had been readied,

348 This would be the usual sense of the word (*yaḥbūrā*) and there could be a reference here to the use of Greek fire. However, Palmer translates it as 'foam' and this probably makes more sense; that is, the ships were churning up the sea so much that foam from the sea was filling the air.



Mu'awiya sent it off with Abu l-A'war. They sailed to Phoenix on the Lycian coast where Constans, the king of the Greeks,<sup>349</sup> and his brother Theodosius met them, accompanied by numerous ships. They were all prepared to do battle with them, but that night, as the king slept, he saw in a dream as though he was in Thessalonica. He recounted his dream to a man who interpreted dreams, who said to the king: 'Would that you had not slept and seen this dream, O king, for Thessalonica is to be explained as *thes allo tēn nikēn*, that is, give the victory to another; that is to say, victory favours your enemies.' However, the king scorned the interpreter of dreams and ordered that battle be waged. They fought for a long time on the sea, but then the Greeks were vanquished. The king very nearly fell into the hands of the enemy, but for the fact that the son of the trumpeter jumped onto the royal ship and had the king cross onto another vessel. He (the trumpeter's son) remained on the king's ship, surrounded by the enemy, who thought he was the king, and in this way he was seized and was killed, though only after he had killed a great number (of them) before he died. The Arabs pursued the Romans as far as Rhodes. This battle on the sea was so violent that it was said that dense smoke ascended among the ships like dust from dry land. Abu l-A'war ordered that they drag out the corpses of the Romans and bring them up out of the water; their number amounted to 20,000. With such a remarkable victory as this, the Arabs carried off booty and riches of every kind and returned to their land.

(656) The killing of 'Uthman and the outbreak of the first Arab civil war<sup>350</sup>

Theophanes: 'Uthman (Outhman), the commander<sup>351</sup> of the Arabs, was assassinated by the inhabitants of Yathrib after he had been emir for ten

349 *Yūnāyē* rather than the usual *rūmāyē* 'Romans'.

350 Theophanes, 346; Agapius, 484; Msyr 11.VIII, 422/430 | 11.XII, 433–34/449–50; *Chron* 1234, 261 | 275–77. 'Uthman's assassination and the ensuing civil war are recounted differently by TC's dependants; Msyr's account has a good chance of reflecting best TC's version, but it is impossible to be sure. Cf. Sebeos, 175–76; John bar Penkaye, 145–46; *Chron Zuqnin*, 152 (AG 967/655–56); *Chron* 819, 12 (AG 967); Eutychius (Cheikho), 2.33; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 368–69 (Dhu l-Hijja AH 35/June 656: 'Uthman's death). On the civil war itself see Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, 78–310 (descriptive), and Petersen, 'Ali and Mu'awiya (historiographical).

351 Theophanes usually describes him as *archēgos* 'leader', but here he uses the term *stratēgos*, which has more military connotations.

years. Discord now prevailed among the Arabs, for those who dwelt in the desert wanted 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad,<sup>352</sup> whereas those who were in Syria and Egypt wanted Mu'awiya.

Agapius: The people of Egypt and Iraq went to 'Uthman ibn Affan, surrounded him and killed him on Friday, the 19th of Dhu l-Qa'da.<sup>353</sup>

MSyr: 'Uthman began to reign in AG 955 (644). This fourth king<sup>354</sup> of the Arabs began to act greedily, amassing gold and changing the customs of the kings before him. The Arabs came together to kill him, but when he promised to behave like the kings before him they made peace with him. When 'Uthman, king of the Arabians, was pressured, as we mentioned above, to give up his wicked behaviour, he promised to do so and they made peace with him on this basis. However, he reverted to his old habits and so the Arabs assembled and asked him: 'Why do you not behave in accordance with what Muhammad handed down to us? We see you piling up treasures by preying on others and you consort with adulterers, fornicators and criminals.' His reply was: 'I am king and I do what I like.' For that reason they were alienated from him and were threatening every day that they would destroy him. They reassembled, armed, at his gate, shouting: 'Change your vile habits or else you will die at once.' He wrote to Mu'awiya to tell him about the situation and to ask him to send him troops. But the Arabs gathered once more and attacked their king 'Uthman with violence and killed him there in the city of Yathrib itself. Meanwhile, Mu'awiya had sent an army under the leadership of Habib<sup>355</sup> to help the king. When they got to Bostra and heard that the king had been killed they went back and told Mu'awiya. From that time the Arabs were divided: at Yathrib and Babylon they were

352 Slightly emending the text, which has: 'Ali, the cousin of 'Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad', but this is nonsensical. In what came to be the standard version of Sunni Islamic history 'Ali, of the family of Hashim of the tribe of Quraysh, was the fourth caliph of the Muslims and the last of the four rightly guided caliphs (after Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman), reigning from AH 35–40/656–661. In reality, however, he was only recognised as such in certain parts of the Muslim Empire; much of Syria stayed loyal to the Umayyad family of the tribe of Quraysh. See *El*, 'Ali b. Abi Talib'; Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, 141–310 (regards 'Ali as the rightful ruler).

353 This equates to 20 May 656. Agapius goes on to narrate the Battle of the Camel, between 'Ali, 'A'isha (Muhammad's wife) and Zubayr and some other events of the first Arab civil war, using a Muslim source, but he does not mention the battle of Siffin nor the death of 'Ali, unlike Theophanes and Dionysius.

354 Msyr is counting Muhammad as the first king.

355 Namely, Habib ibn Maslama; cf. Tabari, 1.2959.



with 'Ali, son-in-law of Muhammad; those in Syria and Egypt were with Mu'awiya. These events occurred in AG 967 and 35 of the Arabs (655–56).

*Chron 1234*: He ('Umar) was succeeded by 'Uthman ibn 'Affan. He was a very greedy man, and once he was king he acted even more greedily. He amassed much gold for himself and changed the laws and venerable ways of the kings before him; I am speaking of Muhammad, Abu Bakr and 'Umar. The Arabs came together and sought to kill him. He then agreed that he would give up his wicked way of life and would adhere to the law of the kings before him.<sup>356</sup> The Arabs had long been scandalised by 'Uthman, as we have shown above, since he did not follow the ways of the kings before him; I am speaking of Muhammad, Abu Bakr and 'Umar. They had followed the path of humility and self-abasement, as is the way of a prophet. But this man ('Uthman) had carriages made for him and multi-coloured banners, with drums, trumpets and bugles sounding out before him. Moreover, (he stood on) the specific place on the steps, that is to say, the raised platform,<sup>357</sup> to which Muhammad, their prophet, ascended at the times of prayer...<sup>358</sup> However, it was another reason that occasioned the killing of 'Uthman. A man by the name of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, a senior companion of their prophet Muhammad,<sup>359</sup> demanded from 'Uthman the kingdom<sup>360</sup> of Damascus... The Arabs forced their way in and assassinated 'Uthman ibn 'Affan in Yathrib.<sup>361</sup>

<sup>356</sup> *Chron 1234* now recounts 'Uthman's collection of the Qur'an, which is most likely drawn from Muslim sources, since this event, though well known to Muslims, is not otherwise mentioned by Syriac sources.

<sup>357</sup> Using the Greek word *bēma*; it served in early Christianity (taken over from Judaism) as the place where the clergy sat and from which lessons from the Bible were read out and the sermon delivered. It later developed in Islam and Western Christianity into the pulpit.

<sup>358</sup> Whereas, *Chron 1234* goes on to explain, Abu Bakr and 'Umar had stood on lower steps than Muhammad. In Muslim sources 'Uthman is accused of a number of violations of the practice of Muhammad and the first two caliphs; see Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, 93; Hinds, 'Murder of 'Uthman', 464; Crone and Zimmerman, *Epistle of Sālim*, 79–91.

<sup>359</sup> Palmer, *WSC*, 181, translates this as 'a relative of their prophet, the son of Muhammad's grandfather Abu Bakr', which is wrong. Muhammad was the son of Abu Bakr by Asma' bint 'Umayy, the widow of 'Ali's brother Ja'far; after Abu Bakr's death, Asma' married 'Ali and so Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr grew up in 'Ali's household and became an ardent supporter of his step-father, as the chronicler of 1234 goes on to relate. See *EI*, 'Muhammad b. Abi Bakr'; Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad* (numerous references; consult index).

<sup>360</sup> *Malkūtā*; one would have expected *mdabbrānūtā* 'governorship' or *ar'āl* 'province' or the like, though it is true that 'Uthman had given Mu'awiya had a pretty free hand over Syria.

<sup>361</sup> *Chron 1234* proceeds to relate at length how 'Uthman wrote a letter for Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr to take to Mu'awiya which instructed the latter to kill the former. Muhammad

### (657) The battle between 'Ali and Mu'awiya at Siffin<sup>362</sup>

Theophanes: Mu'awiya took up arms against 'Ali. The two of them met in the area of Barbalissos by Kaisarion near the Euphrates.<sup>363</sup> The men of Mu'awiya, gaining the upper hand, captured the water (supply), while 'Ali's men were reduced to thirst and were deserting. Mu'awiya did not wish to give battle and gained victory without any toil.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: The partisans of Mu'awiya and of 'Ali prepared for battle. Both sides suffered heavy losses and Mu'awiya returned without having encountered 'Ali, and so once more both sides came together to fight.

*Chron 1234*: They ('Ali and Mu'awiya) encountered one another on the Euphrates, in the vicinity of Callinicum, at a place called Siffin,<sup>364</sup> and they waged battle against one another. A total of some 60,000 men were killed from both sides. 'Ali returned to Kufa and Mu'awiya went back to Damascus, and the war among the Arabs continued.<sup>365</sup>

### (660–61) The assassination of 'Ali and the accession of Mu'awiya<sup>366</sup>

Theophanes: The latter (Mu'awiya) prevailed and ruled twenty-four years.<sup>367</sup>

ibn Abi Bakr made this public during Friday prayers in the mosque of Medina, when 'Uthman was just about to give the sermon, and there was a general riot, which resulted in the death of 'Uthman. This is evidently taken from Muslim sources.

<sup>362</sup> Theophanes, 347; MSyr 11.XII, 434/450 (AG 968/656–57); *Chron 1234*, 277–79. Cf. Sebeos, 176 (Mu'awiya 'brought together his troops, went himself as well into the desert and slew that other king whom they had installed', presumably 'Ali).

<sup>363</sup> Barbalissos is Balis, on the Euphrates west of modern Raqqa; Kaisarion is Neocaesarea, modern Döşemealan, very near Balis (Harper, 'Athis-Neocaesarea-Qasrin-Döşemealan'). The reference is to the battle of Siffin; see *EI*, 'Siffin' and next note.

<sup>364</sup> Arabic: Siffin, in northern Syria, near the Euphrates; identified with the modern village of Abu Hurayra near Raqqa. In the Muslim sources this is the location of a battle between 'Ali and Mu'awiya in AH 37/657, which ends with a call by Mu'awiya for the dispute to be settled by arbitration. For the battle of Siffin cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 152 (AG 968/657); *Ehresh Inscription*, AG 968; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 411–12 (summer AH 37/657).

<sup>365</sup> *Chron 1234* continues to supplement his narrative with material from Muslim sources, such as the account of the arbitration that took place between the warring parties and how Mu'awiya's representative, 'Amr ibn al-'As, got the better of 'Ali's representative, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari. See Hinds, 'The Siffin Arbitration Agreement'.

<sup>366</sup> Theophanes, 346 | 347; Agapius, 486; MSyr 11.XII, 434/450; *Chron 1234*, 279–81.

<sup>367</sup> Theophanes is presumably counting from 657 rather than the usual starting point for Mu'awiya's reign in 661.



While the Arabs were at Siffin (Sapphin), 'Ali, the one from Persia, was assassinated and Mu'awiya became sole ruler. He established his kingly residence at Damascus and deposited there his treasure of money.<sup>368</sup>

Agapius: When Mu'awiya's rule was established, he took the office from Medina to Damascus and took control of the whole world after having been governor for twenty years. This was in the year AG 972, 41 of the Arabs and 19 of Constans, king of the Romans (661).

MSyr: After much shedding of blood and killing, **three zealots** set out to kill the three men **responsible for** the outbreak of **war amongst the Arabs**. **One travelled to Egypt** to kill Sa'id; the second travelled **to the camp of Mu'awiya**, but he **was caught and killed**. The third went to the camp of 'Ali, stabbed 'Ali with a dagger and **killed** him. Then the Arabs in the east and west submitted to Mu'awiya, who **relocated** (the seat of) their **kingdom from Yathrib to Damascus**.<sup>369</sup>

*Chron 1234*: When the Arabs saw all this **war**, **three zealous** men equipped themselves and each one of them set out to kill one of those **responsible for directing the war amongst the Arabs**; I am speaking of 'Ali, Mu'awiya and 'Amr ibn al-'As, who was in Egypt. The **one who travelled to Egypt** was caught and killed; the other who went **to the camp of Mu'awiya was caught and killed** also. The last one, whose name was 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam, went to Kufa, entering it at the time of sunrise, and hid in the mosque. When 'Ali came in to pray in the mosque, he came up behind him and **killed 'Ali** with a blow from his sword...<sup>370</sup> He (Mu'awiya) **relocated** the seat of the **kingdom from Kufa to Damascus** and he placed in it the granaries of the kingdom. (This occurred) after he had already governed the Arabs as commander of the army for twenty years, for he was an honourable

368 The fifth caliph of the Muslims; he reigned AH 41–60/661–80. See *El*, 'Mu'awiya I b. Abi Sufyan'; Lammens, *Mo'awiya*; Polat, *Umwandlungsprozess vom Kalifat zur Dynastie*; Humphreys, *Mu'awiya*.

369 For the death of 'Ali cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 153 (AG 973/661–62); *Chron 819*, 12 (AG 971/659–60); Caetani, *Chronographia*, 451–52 (Ramadan AH 40/January 661, though some sources give an earlier date), 462 (summer 41/661: universal acknowledgement of Mu'awiya). For the Muslim versions of the story of the three men who pledged each to kill one of the emirs responsible for the civil war see *El*, 'Ibn Muljam'.

370 *Chron 1234* now recounts the execution of 'Ali's killer and Mu'awiya's dealings with the sons of 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn. He has Mu'awiya fight and kill Husayn at Karbala, a deed that is ascribed by Muslim sources to Yazid, the son of Mu'awiya, twenty years later. See Hawting, *First Dynasty*, 30–31, 50–51.

man whose tolerance and human compassion seemed unlimited.<sup>371</sup>

**{Peace between the Romans and Arabs**: Theophanes: Peace was concluded between the Romans and the Arabs after Mu'awiya had sent an embassy, because of the rebellion, offering that the Arabs should pay the Romans a daily tribute of 1000 gold coins, one horse and one slave.<sup>372</sup>

**An earthquake**: Theophanes: In the same year there was a violent earthquake and buildings collapsed in Syria and Palestine in the month of June, indiction 2.<sup>373</sup>

### The emergence of the Harurites (Kharijites)<sup>374</sup>

Theophanes: There arose among the Arabs a heresy, that of the so-called Harurites.<sup>375</sup> Mu'awiya captured them. He humiliated the men of Persia while exalting those of Syria; the latter he called Syrians (Isamites)<sup>376</sup> and the former Iraqis (Erakites). The wages of the Syrians he raised to 200 gold

371 *Chron 1234* gives an example of Mu'awiya's magnanimity, relating how a man who was arrested for killing, accidentally, one of Mu'awiya's children was pardoned and set free by the latter.

372 Of TC's dependants this is only reported by Theophanes, 347, who by his words 'because of the rebellion' implies that it fell during the civil war (656–61), which is corroborated by Nasr ibn Muzahim, 37, and by *Chron 819*, 12 ('In the year 971 (659–60)... Mu'awiya made peace with the Romans and sent his general 'Abd al-Rahman to the Roman Empire and he was there for two years'). However, MSyr 11.XII, 435/450, mentions the expiry of a seven-year truce about AG 980, which would mean that it began ca. AG 973/661–62, which is approximately supported by Ibn Khayyat, 189 (AH 41/661) and Elias of Nisibis, 1.141 (AH 42/662). See Stratos, *Seventh Century*, 3.278, n. XV; Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, 37–49.

373 AD 659. Again, this notice is only in Theophanes, 347, though MSyr 11.XIII, 436/456, does note, rather vaguely, 'at that time there was an earthquake which ruined many places'. Cf. *Chron Maronite*, 70 (7 June AG 970/659, which was, as Theophanes says, indiction 2) and Elias of Nisibis, 141, AH 39/AG 970.

374 Theophanes, 347; Agapius, 487; MSyr 11.XII, 434–35/450.

375 Here spelled *Charourgitai*, whereas elsewhere it is spelled *'Arouritai*, which more accurately reflects the Arabic; possibly there is a confusion with the other Arabic name for this group: Kharijites (*khawārij*). These were originally supporters of 'Ali, but then, according to Muslim sources, they become disenchanted with him and at a place called Harura in Iraq they deserted him (*kharaja* 'anhu), and hence the names of Harurites and Kharijites. For further details and references see *El*, 'Harura' and 'Kharidjites'; Wellhausen, *Religio-Political Factions*, 1–91; Brunnow, *Die Charidschiten*; Robinson, *Empires and Elites*, 109–26.

376 Presumably from al-Sham, the Arabic word for Syria, which corresponded to what we would call the Levant (modern Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel/Palestine).



coins while those of the Iraqis he lowered to 30 gold coins.<sup>377</sup>

Agapius: There appeared the Harurites. They were those who thought that the rest of the Muslims and whoever opposed them were in error<sup>378</sup> and that they were more deserving of the kingship than anyone else. Mu'awiya, when he took charge of government, favoured the people of the west over the people of the east because of the obedience of the westerners to him and the enmity towards him of the latter.

MSyr: There appeared among the Arabs the heresy of the Harurites, (named) according to the village of Harura in which they came together and revolted against the kingdom of the Muslims,<sup>379</sup> even until our day.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (660–63) Constans kills his brother and goes to Sicily<sup>380</sup>

Theophanes: Constans killed his own brother Theodosius. | The king abandoned Constantinople and moved to Syracuse in Sicily, intending to transfer the imperial capital to Rome. He sent an order that his wife and three sons – Constantine, Heraclius and Tiberius – should be brought over, but the inhabitants of Byzantium did not let them go.

377 Cf. Ibn A'tham, 2.110–11 (*dhikr mā jarā bayna ahl al-shām wa-ahl al-'Irāq min al-'adāwal* 'An account of the enmity that endured between the Syrians and Iraqis'). Note that this is one of a number of occasions where Theophanes and Agapius share information that is not in Dionysius.

378 In the manuscript (fol. 97v) this sentence reads: *wa-'ammār man ra'ā anna sār al-muslimīn wa-anna man khālafahum 'alā ḡalāla*, which does not make sense. So as to give a clear English rendering I have read it as *wa-hum man ra'ū anna sār al-muslimīn wa-man khālafahum 'alā ḡalāla*, but this is probably not exactly what the original said.

379 *Mhaggrāyē*; this is the Syriac counterpart to the Greek word *magaritēs* (see n. 307 above); both convey the Arabic word *muhājir*, meaning émigrés, whether from Mecca to Medina (as in the case of Muhammad and the early Meccan converts) or from Arabia to Egypt, Syria, Iraq etc. (in the case of the early Arab Muslims in general; see Crone, 'First Century Concept of *hijra*'). We find both *haggar* and *ahgar* meaning to convert to Islam, which means that the present participle could be either *mhaggrāyā* or *mahgrāyā* (singular form; the plural ends in -ē). I prefer *mhaggrāyā*, since it conforms more closely to the Arabic *muhājir* (i.e. both are from active forms of the verb: *hājaralhaggar*).

380 Theophanes, 347–48; Agapius, 490; MSyr 11.XI, 432/446; *Chron. 1234*, 282. Cf. *Chron Maronite*, 70–71. There is a gap between these two events; though the date of his departure from Constantinople is uncertain, he reached southern Italy in the spring of 663 after a lengthy sojourn in Greece.

Agapius: After he (Constans) had killed his brother he transferred his rule from Constantinople to Rome because he feared that people would attack him in their hatred of him for killing his brother. So he moved to Rome, then to Antioch, before settling in Sicily, which is one of the islands of the sea. He lived on it with his commanders and troops. He wrote requesting his household to come, but the people of Constantinople did not allow them to go out to him, saying: 'These are our kings and we do not allow our kings to leave us.'

MSyr: **King Constans killed his brother** Theodosius in order to leave the kingdom to his sons **and** seeing that **he was hated by his troops**, who saw that he did this without pity or motive, **he became afraid and so he went to Rome. When he had** tarried there, the army rose up against him, **saying: 'It is not right for the king to be in Rome, for it is too far from the Arabs.'** **At this Constans went to the island of Sicily. He reached Syracuse and it pleased him to settle there. He also sent for his sons to come to him. However, the Constantinopolitans would not let them go, saying: 'We will not allow our kings to abandon us.'** He, thereupon, proclaimed his three sons rulers: Constantine, Tiberius and Heraclius, and had them live in the royal city, whereas he remained in Syracuse for the rest of his life, fearing that his troops would murder him as he had done to his brother for no reason. He was called by all a second Cain.

*Chron 1234*: **King Constans killed his brother and, realising that he was hated by his troops, he became afraid** lest they kill him **and so he left Constantinople and he went to Rome** to make his seat. **When he had** stayed in it a short while, the senators began to complain, **saying: 'It is not right or appropriate for the king to be in Rome, for it is too far from the Arabs.'** **At this Constans left Rome and went to the island of Sicily. From there he reached Syracuse, the capital city of Sicily, and it pleased him to settle there. He commanded the nobles who accompanied him to build themselves palaces there and to acquire livestock and agricultural estates. He also sent for his sons to come to him from Constantinople. However, the Constantinopolitans would not let them go, but detained them, saying: 'We will not allow our kings to abandon us.'**



**(663–65) Arab campaigns in Asia Minor<sup>381</sup>**

Theophanes: The commander Busr<sup>382</sup> (Bousour) invaded Isauria with his Arabs. He slew and captured many men and returned with 5000 prisoners. | The Arabs made an expedition against the Roman state; they took many captives and devastated many places. | 'Abd al-Rahman (Abderachman) son of Khalid<sup>383</sup> invaded the Roman state, wintered in it and devastated many lands. The Slavs<sup>384</sup> joined him and went down with him to Syria, 5000 of them, and were settled in the village of Seleukobolos<sup>385</sup> in the region of Apamea.

Agapius: There was a raid of the Alans<sup>386</sup> from Armenia in which the Romans suffered a major defeat. Head of the raid was Bishr ibn Artat<sup>387</sup> and he killed a number of patricians; the Muslims took captives and pillaged [...] of the Romans. It was the first captives they took.<sup>388</sup> | Bishr ibn Artat made a raid for a second time against the Romans in which he took prisoners and routed the Romans as far as Constantinople. | 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn al-Walid took prisoners in the land of the Romans and the Muslims reached Koloneia<sup>389</sup> of the land of the Romans. | 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid raided the Romans and took many prisoners, and he brought out with him a great number of the Slavs who were in the land of the Romans and settled

381 Theophanes, 344 | 348 | 348; Agapius, 487 | 488 | 488 | 488 | 488/97v–98v (Mu'awiya, years 213/4516); Msyr 11.XII, 435/450. Agapius lists other raids for this period. *Chron Maronite*, 73 (AG 975/663–64), recounts at length one campaign of 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 484–85 (AH 43/663), 493 (AH 44/664), 502 (AH 45/665). Since Arab raids into Byzantine territory were very frequent in the first Islamic century, typically twice a year (summer and winter), it is not always easy to match up TC's account of them with Muslim sources, but see Brooks, 'Arabs', and Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*.

382 Namely Busr ibn Abi Artat, of the clan of Banu 'Amir of the tribe of Quraysh; he was a staunch ally of the Umayyads and a formidable general. See *El*, 'Busr b. Abi Artat'.

383 Son of the most famous of the generals of the Arab conquests, Khalid ibn al-Walid; they were of the Makhzum clan of the tribe of Quraysh.

384 *Sklavenoi* in Greek; *Ṣaḡālība* in Arabic; they first appear in our sources in the mid-sixth century and first enter the Near East in the early seventh century. See *ODB*, 'Slavs'.

385 Seleucia ad Belum, about 45 km north of Apamea; see Cohen, *Hellenistic Settlements in Syria*, 135–36.

386 A people speaking an East Iranian language in the northern Caucasus region; see *Elr*, 'Alans'; Arzhantseva, 'The Alans'.

387 Read: Busr ibn Abi Artat (see n. 382 above).

388 Assuming that Busr was raiding with the Alans, then this would mean that it was the first captives taken during that year's raiding expedition.

389 *qlwnya*: modern Şebinkarahisar in Pontus, which is the Black Sea region of modern Turkey.

them in one of the villages of Apamea. Bishr ibn Artat raided the Romans and took captive a great number of them and plundered their cities; then he went back. The next year he also took many captives.

MSyr: The seven-year truce which the Romans had made with the Arabs expired and so the Arabs pillaged all the country of Asia, Bithynia and Pamphylia. | The Arabs pillaged again and caused devastation as far as Pontus and Galatia.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

**(665) Confusion over the date of Easter<sup>390</sup>**

Theophanes: There was a confusion over the date of lent.

Agapius: Dissension occurred among the Christians on the subject of Christ, glory be to Him. Some of celebrated the Resurrection on the Feast of Hosannas (Palm Sunday), and some celebrated the Resurrection on the day of the New Sunday (the first Sunday after Easter).

MSyr: **There was confusion over the (date of the) Feast of the Resurrection. Some Christians celebrated the Sunday of the Resurrection on the Sunday of Hosannas (Palm Sunday), while others celebrated the Resurrection on New Sunday, which came after (Easter).**

*Chron 1234*: **There was confusion over the (date of the) Feast of the Resurrection. Some Christians celebrated it on the Feast of Hosannas, and some of them (did so) on New Sunday.**

**(666–67) The rebellion of Shabur against Constans<sup>391</sup>**

Theophanes: The commander of the Armenian army, Shabur (Saborios), who

390 Theophanes, 348; Agapius, 488/98v (Mu 5/665–66); Msyr 11.XII, 433/451 (AG 976 = AH 44 = 665); *Chron 1234*, 282.

391 Theophanes, 348–51; Agapius, 488–89/98v–100v (Mu 8/668–69); Msyr 11.XII, 433–36/451–54 (AG 977/665–66); *Chron 1234*, 282–86 (year 26 of Constans/666–67). For Dionysius I give the version of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 189–93), which is fuller than, but close to, Msyr. The account of Theophanes and Agapius is unusually long, presumably because it is one of the few positive notices for the Byzantine Empire at this time. See Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, 51–75; *PMBZ*, 'Saborios' 6476, 'Sergios' 6534, 'Andreas' 353.



was of Persian origin,<sup>392</sup> rebelled against King Constans and sent to Mu'awiya the commander Sergius, promising Mu'awiya to subjugate the Roman state if the latter would fight along with him against the king. When Constantine, the king's son, had learned of this, he too sent an emissary to Mu'awiya, namely the chamberlain Andrew (Andreas), bearing gifts, so that Mu'awiya should not cooperate with the rebel. When Andrew reached Damascus, he found that Sergius had beaten him to it. As for Mu'awiya, he pretended to be sympathetic to the king. Sergius was seated in front of Mu'awiya and when Andrew entered, Sergius, on seeing him, got up. Mu'awiya upbraided Sergius, saying: 'Why were you afraid?' Sergius excused himself, saying he had done so out of habit. Turning to Andrew, Mu'awiya asked: 'What do you want?' He replied: 'That you should give help against the rebel.' 'Both of you are my enemies', said Mu'awiya; 'To the one who gives more I will provide help.' Then Andrew said to him: 'Be not in doubt, O emir: a few things from a king are more advantageous to you than a great many from a rebel. However, do as you please.' Having said these things, Andrew fell silent. Then Mu'awiya said: 'I will think it over' and he bade both of them go out. Then Mu'awiya summoned Sergius in private and said to him: 'You will no longer do obeisance to Andrew, since by so doing you will achieve nothing.' The next day Sergius came before Andrew and was seated in front of Mu'awiya. When Andrew entered, Sergius did not get up as on the previous day. Looking around at Sergius, Andrew cursed him mightily and threatened him, saying: 'If I remain alive, I will show you who I am.' Sergius replied: 'I am not getting up for you as you are neither a man nor a woman.' Mu'awiya stopped both of them and said to Andrew: 'Undertake to give me as much as Sergius is giving me.' 'And how much is that?' asked Andrew. Mu'awiya replied: 'To give to the Arabs the tax revenue.' 'Woe to you, Mu'awiya, you are advising me to give you the body and keep the shadow. Make any agreement you wish with Sergius, for I will do no such thing. However, disregarding you, we shall have recourse to God, who has more power than you, to defend the Romans and we shall place our hopes in Him.'<sup>393</sup>

392 Thus Theophanes (Greek: *persogenēs*); Msyr has Aprasit'gan, which Peeters ('Pasagnathes-Persogenes') says comes from the Georgian *spasrt'gan*, which means 'of Persian origin', and so reveals an oral Georgian source behind this account. *Chron 1234* just says 'one of his (Constantine's) generals called Shabur'.

393 Yuval, 'Byzantinischen Diplomatie', maintains that Andrew's words here are a translation from Arabic and draw upon the Qur'an, but statements about having recourse to God and placing one's trust in Him, though certainly in the Qur'an, are rather too general to pinpoint an exclusive source.

After these words he said farewell to Mu'awiya and he departed from Damascus in the direction of Melitene along the road that Sergius, too, was about to travel, for the rebel lived in those parts. When he reached Arabissos,<sup>394</sup> he met the commander of the pass, who had not joined the rebel, and ordered him to be on the lookout for Sergius when the latter would be returning, so as to hand him over to him. Andrew himself proceeded to Amnesia<sup>395</sup> to await Sergius and reported to the king what had taken place. Now Sergius, after making a covenant with Mu'awiya as he saw fit, took along the Arab general Fadala (Phadala)<sup>396</sup> with a force of barbarians to fight on the side of Shabur. Sergius was travelling in front of Fadala and, as he was proceeding joyfully to meet Shabur, he fell into Andrew's trap in the passes. They seized him and brought him prisoner to Andrew. When Sergius saw Andrew, he fell at his feet, begging him to spare his life. But Andrew said to him: 'Are you not the Sergius who took pride in his private parts in front of Mu'awiya and called me effeminate? Behold, from now on your private parts will be of no benefit to you; indeed, they will cause your death.' Having said this, he ordered that Sergius' private parts be cut off and he hanged him on a gibbet.

When Constantine had been informed of the arrival of Fadala to assist Shabur, he sent the patrician Nicephorus with a Roman force to oppose Shabur. Now the latter was at Hadrianopolis<sup>397</sup> and, when he had learned that Nicephorus was marching against him, he readied himself for battle. It happened that one day he was going out of the town on horseback, as was his custom. When he came near the town gate, he struck his horse with the whip. The horse became restive and dashed Shabur's head against the gate, thus causing him to die miserably. In this way God granted victory to the king. When Fadala had come to Hexapolis<sup>398</sup> and learned everything, he was in a quandary; he sent a message to Mu'awiya asking for help, seeing that the Romans had healed their rift. Mu'awiya sent him his son Yazid (Izid) with

394 A city in central Cappadocia (modern Afşin, central Turkey), on the route through the Taurus Mountains, from Cappadocian Caesarea to Germaniceia and on to Syria.

395 Unidentified according to Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 490.

396 Fadala ibn 'Ubayd al-Ansari; see also n. 418 below.

397 Possibly the Hadrianopolis in Pisidia (in modern south-west Turkey), assuming that Shabur was marching on Constantinople; Agapius' *Awdīnā* may be a corruption of Hadrianopolis or else of some other place name.

398 According to Tourneur, 'L'Hexapolis arménienne', the Hexapolis (literally 'six cities') was in the province of Armenia III, with its capital at Melitene (Malatya). For Yazid's subsequent attack on Constantinople/Chalcedon see *Chron Byz Arab 741*, §27.



an armed force of numerous barbarians. The two of them came to Chalcedon and took many captives.

Agapius: One of the patricians of the Romans called Shabur rebelled and revolted against Constans. He was in command of the Armenians who were on the side of the king. He corresponded with Mu'awiya and gave out that he would deliver to him the kingdom of the Romans if he helped him. When news reached Constans that Shabur had rebelled and corresponded with the Arabs, he sent to Mu'awiya a servant called Andrew along with many gifts, fearing that he (Mu'awiya) would side with Shabur. The king's messenger arrived in Damascus and found Shabur's messenger already there, and he heard Mu'awiya issuing threats against the king of the Romans and assurances of support and aid to the messenger of the rebel (Shabur). That alarmed the servant (Andrew), whose reputation for bravery, courage and strength was well known among the Arabs. Mu'awiya ordered that the messenger of Shabur be brought in and that the servant be fetched afterwards. When the messenger of Shabur had entered and sat down, the servant was ushered in. The messenger of Shabur looked at him and was afraid of him and was alarmed by his arrival; he then stood up and fell down prostrate before him. When Mu'awiya saw that, he said to him: 'You fool,<sup>399</sup> why did you do that in my court? I would think that you are cowardly and weak and that your master, who sent you, is even more cowardly and weak than you, and more impotent, seeing that the matter of the servant of Constans scared you.' The messenger said: 'O king, it was habit that drove me to that, for when a habit endures it becomes second nature; it was not out of fear or fright.' Then Mu'awiya turned to the servant and asked him about the reason for his coming to him. He (Andrew) replied: 'I have come from the presence of my lord king (of the Romans) in order to learn the news of this man sitting before you and the news of his master who sent him to you.' Mu'awiya said: 'The situation of you two is one (and the same to me) and each one of you is my enemy. However, whichever of you I find to go along with us and take an interest in what concerns us, we shall be friendly towards him, supporting of him and interested in him. If your master gives us abundant taxes, submits to us and obeys us, then our support for him will be ready and our aid to him will be on hand. And if this rebel against your master displays obedience and gives abundantly of them (taxes), we shall support and aid him, even though

<sup>399</sup> *Nāqīš al-ra'y*, which very exactly translates *Chron 1234's ḥašīr hawnā*; many other examples of this could be found in this particular narrative, suggesting that Agapius is translating it/has a translation of it from Syriac.

he is a rebel against his master.' The servant replied: 'By my life, O king, both of us are enemies, as you have described, but the slave and the free man are not equal before you; no indeed, for it is to be expected that each one of the two conducts himself in regard to you in a manner that befits him. The free man is not like the slave. The free man conducts his affairs in accordance with his free state and nobility of soul, and the slave conducts his affairs in accordance with his slavish state and baseness of soul and devotion to every stratagem. If my master makes an agreement with you, you will think better of him than of the slave, for he follows the behaviour of kings whereas the other adheres to that of slaves. Moreover, it is not appropriate for you to trust in a slave who does not act well towards his master who has acquired him and trained him; he who does not act well towards that friend will not act well towards the enemy and towards one whom he has never known. If the dog does not protect his master, who has reared him and given him food and drink, how should he protect the stranger, whom he has never known? If the wild beast is not good to his parent, who has borne and bred him, how should he be good to the human, who is his enemy?' Mu'awiya said to the servant: 'Go to your master in peace, for you have lost what you asked of us.'

The servant said: 'May God give you good recompense, O king', and then he left his presence, mounted his riding animal and took the road to Melitene, because Shabur was in its environs. He advanced to [...] following the forts of the Romans, which he had traversed by taking (the same route as) the messenger of Shabur (was above to take).<sup>400</sup> Then he wrote to Constans informing him of Mu'awiya's reply to him and of Mu'awiya's order that Shabur be told in writing of his agreement to what he had asked for, his promise to supply him with troops that would enable him to fight the king of the Romans and anything else he wanted. The messenger of the patrician left, making his way towards his master, until he came to one of the cities of the Romans and he found shelter in a ruin for the night. He did not establish that people had surrounded him, and they seized him and all the men who were with him and dispatched them to the servant Andrew. When the messenger of Shabur saw the servant, he fell down prostrate on the ground before him and asked his forgiveness, but the servant ordered his testicles to be removed and ordered that they be hung on the tip of a lance with the inscription: 'This is the revenge of Andrew, servant of the king, on the envoy of the rebel Shabur.'

When it reached Constans what the servant had done to the messenger

<sup>400</sup> This sentence is unclear in the manuscript and my translation is based on *Chron 1234* below.



of the rebel and that troops were on their way from Mu'awiya to assist him, he dispatched a patrician called Nicephorus with Roman troops to fight Shabur, who was in *Awdīnā*.<sup>401</sup> The approach of the army came to Shabur's knowledge, and he began going out every day to train himself for battle. One day he went out as usual, but when he arrived at the gate of the city he encouraged his mount with the whip, and he reared and carried him forward, and he struck his head against the city gate. He fell down unconscious, was ill for a few days and then died. Mu'awiya had already sent many troops to Shabur; when they arrived at Melitene they heard of the death of Shabur and so they quartered there. They wrote to Mu'awiya about that, asking him to reinforce them with soldiers so that they could raid Roman territory. Mu'awiya commanded his son Yazid to take Arab cavalry and catch up with the army. Yazid set off to them; they joined forces and reached as far as Chalcedon, where they conducted operations and left with many prisoners and goods.

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron 1234*.

*Chron 1234*: One of Constans' generals, called Shabur, rebelled against him. He sent an envoy, a man called Sergius, to Mu'awiya, the king of the Arabs, to convey his promise that he would subject the land of the Romans to his (Mu'awiya's) rule if he would send him an army and help him to kill Constans. When Constantine, the son of Constans, who was in Constantinople, learned of this, he too sent an envoy to Mu'awiya, a eunuch called Andrew, who was the royal chamberlain. With him he sent precious gifts and royal presents, requesting that he refrain from taking the part of that rebel and from helping him in his attempted coup. The eunuch Andrew set out on a fast post-horse and reached Damascus, where he found that Sergius, the emissary of Shabur, had already been admitted to Mu'awiya's presence and had been well received. King Mu'awiya had heard that Andrew was on his way – his name was very well known among the Arabs, since he possessed strength of character, both in military prowess and in rhetorical ability, in spite of being a eunuch. However out of antipathy<sup>402</sup> for Constans, he had ordered that Sergius should be admitted first, and then Andrew the Eunuch. So it happened that Sergius went in first and sat down next to Mu'awiya and that Andrew only then received his instructions to go in. As soon as Andrew had entered and taken his position in front of Mu'awiya, Sergius leapt to his feet and placed himself before him and prostrated to him. When

401 See n. 397 above.

402 *Anṭipātīyā*: one of a number of Greek loan words in this passage.

Mu'awiya saw what happened, he became angry with Sergius. 'You fool!' he shouted at him, 'You coward! What is wrong with you? Why did you prostrate yourself before that man? If this one who is a servant frightens you so much that you get up and prostrate yourself before him, what would you not do if you saw the one who sent him?' Sergius answered: 'I did it by force of habit, not out of fear of him.' Then Mu'awiya asked Andrew: 'Where have you come from and what do you want?' He replied: 'O emir, I have been sent to you by my king to ask you to expel, if you will, this man who is sitting next to you from your presence.' Mu'awiya said: 'Your king and the man who sent this envoy and all the rest of you are our enemies. Whoever will embrace our cause and pay attention to our interests can count on my support. Therefore, if your king gives me more gold, we shall help him to suppress his rebellious tyrant, but if the one who sent this envoy not only outbids him, but also embraces our cause, we shall set him on the throne.'

To this Andrew replied as follows: 'True, O emir, both parties are your enemies, both my king and the one who has rebelled against him. But some enemies are better than others, just as some friends are better than others. There can be no comparison between the lord and the slave. The one, being a lord, conducts his affairs in a noble and magnificent manner, while the other, whose life has been one of servile subservience, will do business in a thoroughly servile way. As befits low-born people, he will promise more than he can deliver, and such promises are never kept. So if my king offers to enter into a covenant with you on certain conditions, whatever they may be, even if he promises you less than the tyrant, it is in him that you should place confidence, and you should not try to haggle. For if that tyrant should attempt to gain your favour by promising more, you may be quite certain that he is a liar and that he will not keep his word. Is it likely that one who has proved himself so ungrateful in recompensing his lord for all his benefits towards him would keep his promises to you, who are his enemy? However, you must do whatever you think is best.' Mu'awiya replied; 'You have spoken well, but now you are dismissed. Go and think about what you have heard me say and come back again tomorrow.'

Once Andrew had gone, Mu'awiya said to Sergius: 'You, too, be off to your lodgings and make sure you get here first tomorrow! Be on your guard and do not prostrate yourself before the eunuch, as you did today.' The next day Sergius was there before Andrew. He was admitted to Mu'awiya's presence and Mu'awiya told him to sit down. Then Andrew arrived and was also ordered to be seated. Sergius broke his habit and did not get up when Andrew came in. The latter glared at Sergius and spoke angrily to him in



Greek: 'You faithless and thrice-wretched fellow! Why did you not rise from your seat to show respect when I came in, as befits your status as a slave? Did you remain seated so as to show off your shamelessness to Mu'awiya?' Sergius answered him callously, treating him with scorn and contempt, and calling him effeminate: not a man, nor a woman, nor *oudeteros*, which means 'either of these'.<sup>403</sup> Then Andrew said to him: 'If the Lord grants me life, you shall pay for this outrage! I, personally, shall remove your testicles from their place and put them in your hands.' Thus these two wrangled in front of Mu'awiya until he commanded them to be silent. Then he spoke to Andrew: 'What do you say? Do you agree to make a covenant on the same conditions as Sergius and will you give as much as he has promised or not?' Andrew replied: 'What are the conditions, O emir?' Mu'awiya said: 'The name and privileges of kingship may go to you, but the revenue of the lands goes to the Arabs.<sup>404</sup> If you approve, give your word and make a covenant; and if you do not approve, you may withdraw and go in peace.' Andrew answered: 'O emir, what you require would leave the Arabs with the body and us with the shadow. What advantage would there be for us in that? Do a deal with Sergius if you like. We shall take refuge in God, who is more able than you to help the kingdom of the Romans.'

So Andrew left Damascus, riding a royal mule, and made his way to Melitene, using the route which Sergius would take on his way back to the one who sent him. He ordered the guards of the pass<sup>405</sup> to set up an ambush in the steepest part of the pass and to arrest Sergius when he came through. The latter, meanwhile, did a deal with Mu'awiya, by which Mu'awiya was to send an Arab army to help Shabur. Then he went ahead to tell the rebel leader that the army was on its way. When he arrived at the pass and found himself deep within a ravine, the ambush was sprung and Sergius

<sup>403</sup> Another example of use of Greek, which reflects either that this account is translated from a Greek original or that the Syriac author is trying to reinforce the impression that the conversation of Andrew and Sergius was held in Greek or just trying to show off his own knowledge of Greek. Theophanes himself does not use this word; he just says: 'I am not getting up for you since you are neither a man nor a woman' (*ouk ei anēr oude gynē*). And Msyr just says that Sergius called Andrew 'effeminate' (*neshāyā*).

<sup>404</sup> Palmer, WSC, 191 n. 471, suggests rewording to 'the revenue and the lands go to the Arabs', but Theophanes states that it is the tax revenue the Arabs wanted and it would seem that the policy of the early Muslims was indeed not to become landowners, but just to enjoy the tax revenue from the land.

<sup>405</sup> *Nātūrē d-qlīsūrā*. Msyr renders this as a construct: *nāṭray klīsūrā*, which is very close to Theophanes' *kleisouraphylax*. The latter is a neologism in Greek and one could possibly see it as an attempt to render the Syriac construct expression.

was seized. They bound him and his escorts hand and foot and sent him to Andrew the chamberlain. When he was confronted with him, he fell on his face and grovelled in the dirt, begging for forgiveness. But Andrew said to him: 'You are Sergius, the one who was so proud of his balls, the one who swaggered in front of Mu'awiya, the one who called me effeminate.' Then he ordered his testicles to be extracted and placed them in his hands, before commanding them to hang him on a stake. Such was the revenge which Andrew took on Sergius.

As for Mu'awiya, in accordance with the agreement reached between him and Sergius, he sent the general Fadala (Fadl) with a large number of Arabs to assist the rebel Shabur. When these troops reached the tyrant, Shabur happened just to have mounted a horse to come out through the gateway of his palace. The horse reared up and he was jammed between the wall and the crest of the gate. His head was crushed and he died, just when the Arab army reached Melitene. Fadala wrote to Mu'awiya about what had happened, and Mu'awiya sent his son Yazid, who caught up with Fadala and then together they invaded the territory of the Romans. They took captives and plundered, and generally did as they wanted. Under the pressure of this aggression the Romans offered them gifts; the Arabs made peace and went back to their country.

#### A flood at Edessa<sup>406</sup>

Theophanes: There was a flood at Edessa and many men perished.

Agapius: There was a substantial rising of the waters of the Tigris, Nile and Euphrates and all the rivers overflowed and wrecked many places, especially the river at Edessa. It rose until it flooded the city, destroyed its walls and drowned innumerable people and beasts.

MSyr: **There was a flood at Edessa at night. The waters sapped the wall and it was breached. The city was filled with water and many were drowned in it.**

*Chron 1234*: On 4 November of this year, in the middle of the **night, there was a great flood of waters. The waters sapped the wall of Edessa and breached it. The city was filled with water and thousands of people drowned in it.**

<sup>406</sup> Theophanes, 351; Agapius, 489; Msyr 11.XII, 433/451 (AG 977/665–66); *Chron 1234*, 286–87.



(668) The death of Constans and accession of Mezizios and  
Constantine IV<sup>407</sup>

Theophanes: King Constans was assassinated in Syracuse of Sicily while in a bath...<sup>408</sup> When he had entered the aforesaid bath he was accompanied by a certain Andrew, son of Troilos,<sup>409</sup> who was his attendant. As he began to smear himself with soap, Andrew picked up a bucket, struck the king on the head and immediately escaped. As the king had been in the bath for a long time those who were outside rushed in and found him dead. After burying him, they made king by constraint a certain Mezizios,<sup>410</sup> an Armenian, for he was very comely and handsome. When Constantine heard of his father's demise he arrived in Sicily with a great fleet and, having captured Mezizios, put him to death together with his father's murderers. After establishing order in the West, he hastened to Constantinople and reigned over the Romans together with his brothers Tiberius and Heraclius.

Agapius:<sup>411</sup> At the end of twenty-seven years of his reign the Romans killed him, I mean Constans, in a bath in Sicily. In the ninth year of Mu'awiya, Constans, king of the Romans, was killed after his return from raiding the Slavs. This happened when he entered the bath in Sicily...<sup>412</sup> When Constans was in the bath one of his attendants took a bucket, mixed in it mallow and soap, and put this on Constans' head. While the latter's eyes were filled with the mallow and soap, so that he could not open them, the attendant took the bucket and struck Constans on the head with it, so killing him. He rushed out of the bath to escape and no one heard any more of him.

407 Theophanes, 351–52; Agapius, 455 | 490–91 (Mu 9/669–70); Msyr 11.XII, 435/450–51 (AG 980/668–69); *Chron 1234*, 287 (AG 980). Cf. Nicephorus, §33 ('after a reign of 27 years'). See *ODB*, 'Constantine IV, king (668–85)'.

408 Theophanes gives here an explanation, drawn from a Byzantine source, of why Constans was in Sicily (the anger he had aroused because of his murder of his brother and, in particular, his exiling of various church figures: pope Martin, Maximus the Confessor and two of Maximus' disciples).

409 Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 491, note the existence of a seal of a patrician named Troilos (Seibt, no. 132).

410 His Armenian name was Mžēž Gnuni and he would seem to have been commander of the *opsikion* (the military district in the north-west of modern Turkey that lies across the sea from Constantinople). See *ODB*, 'Mezizios, usurper'.

411 This is the last time that Agapius gives a double mention of an event (see n. 87 above and n. 413 below). Note that each mention is dated in a different way (years of Constans and Mu'awiya respectively), though both equate to 668–69.

412 Here comes the passage that we cited above in the notice on 'Constans kills his brother and goes to Sicily', which Agapius adduces in explanation of why Constans was in Sicily.

The servants remained outside waiting for the king to come out, but when they had been sitting a long time and it was getting late and he still had not come out, they entered the bath and found him unconscious. They brought him out and he lived for that day, but then died having reigned for twenty-seven years. The Romans assembled and made king over them Mezizios, an Armenian by race; he was wise and possessed of courage and valour. When his son Constantine heard of the death of his father, he set sail for Sicily. He entered it, seized Mezizios and executed him. He arrested those who participated in the killing of his father and in the enthronement of someone besides him over them; some of them he killed, some he imprisoned and some he banished. Then Constantine returned to Constantinople and ruled with his brothers for sixteen years from the year AG 981 (668–69) and 50 of the Arabs (670).<sup>413</sup>

MSyr: **King Constans was killed in Syracuse. For he went into the bath-house and while Andrew, son of Troilus, was covering his head with shampoo and soap, so that he was unable to open his eyes, he (Andrew) took a silver bucket, struck and beat<sup>414</sup> him with it, and he died. Andrew fled and the Greeks then took for themselves as king a man by the name of Mezizios, who was Armenian by race. He had the rank of patrician and he was heroic, of agreeable appearance and modest in his behaviour; and they appointed him against his will. When Constantine heard of his father's assassination, he came to Sicily and killed Mezizios and those who had made him king. Then he returned to Constantinople and ruled over the Romans together with his two brothers, Tiberius and Heraclius.**

*Chron 1234*: **King Constans was killed in Syracuse, the (capital) city of Sicily, which was made into the royal residence for him. For he went into the bath-house, with Andrew, son of Troilus, and while he (Andrew) was washing the king, covering his head with shampoo and soap, so that he was unable to open his eyes, Andrew took a silver bucket, which he had placed in front of the king, and brought it down on his head and battered him. He (Andrew) hurried away out of the bath-house and no one caught**

413 The synchronism is slightly out. Having noted this incident, Agapius, 455, gives a computation of the years from Adam to his day, then jumps back to AG 933/622 and continues from there, often reporting events a second time (this is why two page references have been given for him here and in some earlier footnotes). The reason for this is unclear; possibly it reflects a change of source.

414 The text would seem to have *tfā* 'shut, lay near', but this does not make much sense. Possibly one should read *tfah*, which can mean 'to-hit'; this would make sense and would require very little emendment to the text.



him. They bore the king away to his royal palace, but two days later he departed the world. Then the Romans appointed as king over them a **patriarch, a man by the name of Mezizios, an Armenian. When Constantine heard of his father's assassination**, he travelled to Sicily with a large army, seized **Mezizios** and **killed** him and all those responsible for his father's death, and **returned to Constantinople**.

{**A census**: MSyr: Abu l-A 'war registered for tax all the Christian peasants of all Syria. As a matter of fact, Christian peasants had not paid tax under Arab rule.}<sup>415</sup>

#### (670) The Arabs attack Africa<sup>416</sup>

Theophanes: The Saracens invaded Africa and took, it is said, 80,000 captives.

Agapius: The Arabs attacked the Romans in Africa and took 100,000 of them captive.

MSyr: **At the beginning of the reign of Constantine and his sons, the Arabs invaded Africa and took captive about 80,000 people.**

*Chron 1234*: **At the beginning of his (Constantine's) reign**, an army of **Arabs invaded Africa and took away about 80,000 captives** and returned to their country.

#### A harsh winter<sup>417</sup>

Theophanes: There was a severe cold and many men as well as beasts suffered hardship.<sup>418</sup>

415 MSyr 11.XII, 435/450. He gives the date as AG 980, 27 of Constans, 9 of Mu'awiya and 54 of the Arabs, which would provide a correct synchronism for 668–69 if one emended the Hijra date from 54 to 48. For discussion of this notice see al-Qadi, 'Population Census', 353–59.

416 Theophanes, 352; Agapius, 491 (same year as previous notice); MSyr 11.XIII, 436/454 (AG 981/669–70); *Chron 1234*, 287. This is probably the raid of Mu'awiya ibn Hudayj in AH 50/670, which according to Ibn Khayyat, 195, resulted in the capture of many prisoners. See Benabbès: 'Les premiers raids arabes en Numidie Byzantine'.

417 Theophanes, 353; Agapius, 491; MSyr 11.XIII, 436/456 (AG 980/668–69).

418 Theophanes adds that Phadala (Fadala ibn 'Ubayd al-Ansari) led a winter campaign at Cyzicus. Muslim sources mention Fadala's raids in the years AH 49–51/669–71 (e.g. Ibn Khayyat, 194, 205; Tabari, 2.86–87); cf. Elias of Nisibis, 144: AH 49/AG 980/669.

Agapius: Much snow fell and there was a severe cold; many men and beasts died.

MSyr: There was a harsh winter: much cold, ice and snow. Olive trees and wines shrivelled up in Syria and Mesopotamia.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### Busr ibn Abi Artat raids Asia Minor<sup>419</sup>

Theophanes: Busr once again invaded the Roman state and devastated the region of Hexapolis.<sup>420</sup> | Busr made an expedition and after taking many captives returned home.

Agapius: Busr ibn (Abi) Artat raided the Romans; he killed and took away many captives.

Dionysius: not recorded

#### A bow in the sky<sup>421</sup>

Theophanes: In the month of March a bow appeared in the sky and all men shuddered and said it was the end of the world.

Agapius: A bow appeared in full in the clouds; fear and consternation overwhelmed people. Many said that the time of the (day of) Resurrection was at hand.

MSyr: **At the third watch of the night, a complete bow was seen. It is something most unnatural for a bow to be seen when the sun is underneath the earth.** All who saw it thought that the end of the world would come that year.

*Chron 1234*: On the eve of Tuesday (i.e. Monday evening), **at the third watch of the night, a complete bow was seen in the sky. It is something**

419 Theophanes, 348 | 353; Agapius, 491 (Mu 12/672). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 545, 566–67, 576 (AH 50/670, 51/671, 52/672); Elias of Nisibis, 144: AH 51/AG 982/671. See Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 74.

420 Theophanes adds that 'Fadala wintered there' (i.e. in the Hexapolis), which may be a reference to Fadala's role in the revolt of Shabur (see entry thereon above).

421 Theophanes, 353; Agapius, 491 (Mu 13/673); MSyr 11.XIII, 436/456 (AG 989/677–78); *Chron 1234*, 288 (year 4 of Constantine/672–73).



unusual and most unnatural for a bow to be seen when the sun is underneath the earth.

(ca. 672)<sup>422</sup> A failed Arab naval advance on Constantinople<sup>423</sup>

Theophanes: The deniers of Christ (i.e. the Muslims) equipped a great fleet and after they had sailed past Cilicia, Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah (Mouamed son of Abdelas) wintered at Smyrna, while Qays (Kaisos) wintered in Cilicia and Lycia.<sup>424</sup> The emir Khalid (Chale)<sup>425</sup> was also sent to assist them inasmuch as he was a competent and bold warrior. The aforesaid Constantine, on being informed of so great an expedition of God's enemies against Constantinople, built large biremes bearing cauldrons of fire and light ships<sup>426</sup> equipped with siphons, and ordered them to be stationed at the Proclianesian harbour of Caesarius.<sup>427</sup> In the following year the aforesaid fleet of God's enemies set sail and came to anchor in the region of Thrace, between the western point of the Hebdomon, that is the Magnaura, as it is called, and the eastern promontory, named Kyklobion.<sup>428</sup> Every day there was a military engagement from morning until evening, between the outworks of

422 This is not the expedition of Yazid, son of Mu'awiya, which occurred in 667–68 in the wake of Shapur's failed revolt (see above). It is most likely the campaign of Sufyan ibn 'Awf in AH 52/672 (see nn. 424 and 433 below), though secondary literature often spreads it across several years in the 670s following Theophanes' mention of 'seven years' (see Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 76–82).

423 Theophanes, 353–54; Agapius, 492; Msyr 11.XIII, 436–37/455. *Chron 1234* usually offers a more positive assessment of the Arabs than Msyr and so may have omitted this unequivocal Arab defeat for this reason.

424 The first general is probably Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah al-Thaqafi, whom Tabari, 2.157, names as a participant in a raid into Byzantine territory in AH 52/672 (and not, as Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 493, suggest, a garbling of different names). Qays may intend 'Abdallah ibn Qays al-Fazari, who raided Byzantine territory on a number of occasions from AH 48/668–57/677 (e.g. Tabari, 2.85, 171, 180).

425 Chaleb in Nicephorus, §34. This may be 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn Walid, who certainly enjoyed fame as a brave fighter, in part derived from the great repute of his father. See *PMBZ*, 'Xale/Khalid' 3644.

426 *Dromōnes*, that is, small, fast and manoeuvrable boats that 'might rapidly dart to and fro over the waves of the sea around the very large ships' (Sebeos, 170); see Zuckermann, 'Learning from the Enemy', 109–113.

427 This is to be identified with the Theodosian harbour on the south side of the city, opening onto the Propontis (Sea of Marmara).

428 Hebdomon and Kyklobion are suburbs of Constantinople on the European shore of the Propontis.

the Golden Gate<sup>429</sup> and the Kyklobion, with thrust and counter-thrust. The enemy kept this up from the month of April until September. Then, turning back, they went to Cyzicus,<sup>430</sup> which they captured, and wintered there. And in the spring they set out and, in similar fashion, made war on sea against the Christians. After doing the same for seven years and being put to shame with the help of God and His mother, and having moreover lost a multitude of warriors and having a great many wounded, they turned back with much sorrow. And as this fleet, which was to be sunk by God, put out to sea, it was overtaken by a wintry storm and the squalls of a hurricane in the area of Syllaion.<sup>431</sup> It was dashed to pieces and perished entirely.<sup>432</sup> Now Sufyan (Souphan), the younger son of 'Awf, joined battle with Florus, Petronas and Cyprian, who were at the head of a Roman force, and 30,000 Arabs were killed.<sup>433</sup> At that time Callinicus, an architect from Baalbek in Syria, took refuge with the Romans and manufactured a naval fire with which he kindled the ships of the Arabs and burned them with their crews. In this way the Romans returned in victory, by virtue of having acquired the naval fire.<sup>434</sup>

Agapius: Mu'awiya took many ships and raided the Romans, killing and taking captives. A plague befell the people in Egypt and Palestine. In year fourteen of Mu'awiya (673–74) the Arabs raided the Romans by sea and reached Lycia. Three patricians went out to them, engaged them and the Romans killed 30,000 Arab men. The survivors headed back out to sea. When they were in open sea, some Romans in a boat caught up with them and threw fire over their ships and all of them were burned. The Romans enjoyed a great and victorious triumph this year. They were the first to use the (Greek) fire and it became thereafter customary.

429 The Golden Gate is the southernmost gate of the walls of Constantinople and the nearest to Kyklobion.

430 An ancient town of Mysia in Asia Minor, on the south shore of the Sea of Marmara facing Constantinople.

431 An important fort and settlement near Atteleia (modern Antalya) in Pamphylia, on the southern coast of modern Turkey.

432 The entry so far comes from a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §34), but the next part is from TC.

433 Muslim sources have Sufyan ibn 'Awf raid Roman territory in AH 52/672 and 55/675 (e.g. Tabari, 2.157, 171; Ibn Khayyat, 205, 212); the latter is most likely meant here. On the Byzantine military figures named here see *PMBZ*, 'Phloros' 6206, 'Petronas' 5909, 'Kyprianos' 4173.

434 There is a substantial amount of literature on the topic of Greek fire; most recently see Haldon, 'Greek Fire'. This naval engagement is just one of many in the 670s (cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 599, 608, 617, 626, 637) and is presumably selected for being an example of a major Byzantine victory. See also *PMBZ*, 'Kallinikos' 3585.



MSyr: The Arabs once again raided Lycia and Cilicia. Returning to Lycia, they besieged a city on the coast. Then three patricians of the Romans marched against them and defeated them. That day about 30,000 Arabs died, while those who escaped by ship ran into heavy storms. A carpenter from Baalbek, by name Callinicus, who had come from Syria to the Roman Empire as a refugee, concocted a flaming substance and set fire to the Arab ships. With this fire he destroyed the rest of those that were confidently riding out at sea and everyone on board. Since that time the fire invented by Callinicus, called naphthalene, has been constantly in use by the Romans.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### Sundry natural disasters<sup>435</sup>

Theophanes: A plague occurred in Egypt. | A sign appeared in the sky on a Saturday. | There was a great plague of locusts in Syria and Mesopotamia

Agapius: Plague occurred among the people in Egypt and Palestine. | Mice were numerous in Syria with the result that a great famine occurred there.

MSyr: An awesome comet appeared every morning from 28 August to 26 October, sixty days in all. | The rats became numerous in Syria and Phoenicia and destroyed the crops, causing a great food shortage. The following year there were locusts.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

{An Arab raid in Crete: Theophanes: 'Abdallah ibn Qays and Fadala wintered in Crete.}<sup>436</sup>

435 Plague: Theophanes, 353, and Agapius, 492. Sign/Comet: Theophanes, 354, and MSyr 11.XIII, 436/456 (AG 988); cf. Elias of Nisibis, 145 (AH 56/AG 987/676), citing Jacob, bishop of Edessa (d. 708), author of a Eusebian-style chronicle. Rats: Agapius, 492, and MSyr 11.XIII, 436/457 (AG 989). Locusts: Theophanes, 354, and MSyr 11.XIII, 436/457 (AG 990). Theophanes' sign in the sky could also be a reference to a solar eclipse which MSyr (*ibid*) reports for a Sunday in December AG 983/672.

436 Theophanes, 354. For Fadala see n. 418 above.

#### (677) The Mardaites in the mountains of Lebanon<sup>437</sup>

Theophanes: The Mardaites entered Mount Lebanon and made themselves masters from the Black Mountain as far as the holy city<sup>438</sup> and captured the peaks of Lebanon. Many slaves, captives and natives took refuge with them so that in a short time they grew to many thousands.<sup>439</sup> When Mu'awiya and his advisers learned of this, they were much afraid, realising that the Roman Empire was guarded by God. So he sent ambassadors to King Constantine asking for peace and promising to pay yearly tribute to the king...<sup>440</sup>

Agapius: The Romans boarded ships and set off in them on the sea until they came to the coast of Tyre and Sidon. Then they disembarked and

437 Theophanes, 355 (year 9 of Constantine/676–77); Agapius, 492–93 (Mu 17/676–77); MSyr 11.XIII, 437/455 (year 9 of Constantine); *Chron 1234*, 288 (year 9 of Constantine). Muslim sources (especially Baladhuri, 159–61; Ibn al-'Adim, 9.4188) relate that a Byzantine military force (led by a Byzantine commander called Plqt, perhaps Polyuktos) arrived to foment rebellion against Muslim rule in Syria and 'a great number of the Jarājima, Aramaean peasants (*anbāt*) and runaway slaves' joined them. It is not clear whether the term Mardaites, the Syriac word for rebels, is being applied in our sources only to the Byzantine forces or to all of those joining in this revolt against Muslim rule. Woods, 'Corruption and Mistranslation', argues that the Mardaites were deserters from the Byzantine army, probably from Shabur's revolt, which is possible, but there is no real evidence for it. The Jarājima were long-time residents of the Black Mountain/Mount Amanus region around Antioch; they had initially tried to stay out of the Arab–Byzantine wars, but when confronted agreed to act as spies for the Muslims in return for their autonomy and exemption from the poll-tax. See Lammens, *Mo'awiya*, 14–22; Moosa, 'Maronites'; Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, 77–97.

438 Woods, 'Corruption and Mistranslation', argues that this must refer to Cyrrhus in northern Syria, not to Jerusalem, because the Mardaites' territory was around Mount Amanus near Antioch. This is true, but, as we are told by Muslim sources (not considered by Woods), the rebels made their way south using the mountain ranges as a conduit, conducting raids as they went (Ibn al-'Adim explicitly mentions the Golan region).

439 This echoes the description of Baladhuri quoted in n. 437 above and makes one wonder whether TC's account derives from a Muslim source.

440 Theophanes goes on to describe the negotiations between Constantine's envoy, the 'illustrious' John Pitzigaudes, and Mu'awiya and his emirs and Qurayshites (*Korasēnoi*), which led to the signing of a thirty-year peace. Baladhuri also says that the Mardaite raids prompted the Muslims to sue for peace, but speaks of 'Abd al-Malik, who was distracted by the civil war raging in his realm. Nicephorus, §34, has the same account of Mu'awiya suing for peace, but states that he was prompted to do so by the loss of a naval fleet, not Mardaite raids. Further on TC reports that Mardaite raids impelled 'Abd al-Malik to request a peace treaty (see the notice thereon below, s.a. '685'), so Theophanes may well be wrongly linking two accounts (i.e. of Mardaite raids and Mu'awiya's peace overtures). The Mardaite raids may, nevertheless, have gone on for some time.



seized Mount Lebanon and took refuge in it. People called them Jarājima.<sup>441</sup> Having seized Mount Lebanon, they spread from the Mountain of Galilee to the Black Mountain. This was because Constantine had planted them to distract the Arabs from raiding.

**MSyr: The Romans came to Mount Lebanon. They were called Mardaïtes or Līpūrē;<sup>442</sup> the inhabitants of Syria called them Gargūmāyē.<sup>443</sup> They seized (lands) from the Mountain of Galilee to the Black Mountain. They went out constantly to raid, for that is why they had been sent by the Romans. Finally the Arabs overcame them; they killed some and gouged out the eyes of the rest.**

*Chron 1234:* People from the Romans came by ships to the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon and they went in to Mount Lebanon. They were called Mardaïtes. They seized (lands) from the Mountain of Galilee to the Black Mountain. They went out constantly to raid and lay waste the lands of the Arabs.

#### (679) An earthquake in Mesopotamia<sup>444</sup>

Theophanes: A severe earthquake occurred in Mesopotamia, as a result of which Batnan and the dome of the church of Edessa fell down. Mu'awiya rebuilt the latter by the zeal of the Christians.

Agapius: There was an earthquake in April,<sup>445</sup> and one of the villages of

441 The text has *kharāniqa*, but this is meaningless and is probably a mistake for *jarājima* (see n. 437 above). Agapius' (and Dionysius') account is confused – people did not call the Roman military unit Jarājima; the Jarājima were residents of Mount Amanus who joined forces with the Roman military unit. However, it may be that the term 'Mardaite', the Syriac word for rebel, was applied to all who joined this revolt, whether Jarājima, Romans, Aramaean peasants or slaves; see n. 437 above.

442 This word is usually assumed to be of Greek origin; either 'plunderers', from the Greek *laphyrā* 'spoils' (thus Chabot) or 'deserters' from *leipō* (thus Woods, 'Corruption and Mistranslation').

443 This is the equivalent of the Arabic word Jarājima (Arabic 'j' = Syriac 'g'), which, say the Muslim sources, is derived from the name for the principal city of the Mount Amanus region, Jarjūma/Gargūma.

444 Theophanes, 356; Agapius, 493; Msyr 11.XIII, 436–37/457; *Chron 1234*, 288. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 153 (Sunday, 3 April AG 990/679); *Chron 819*, 12 (AG 990).

445 Vasiliev has read this as Bys'n and translated it as Baysan, presumably understanding it as the city near Tiberias, which is inappropriate here. The earthquake occurred in April and so it makes much better sense to read this as Nisan, the Syrian name for the month of April. Further

Serug, called Batnan, fell down – its walls and all its houses collapsed. The same happened at Edessa and many places in it were ruined. Mu'awiya ordered it to be rebuilt and the churches of Edessa that had collapsed to be restored. The reason for that was that he had once stayed there when he was travelling to fight 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.

**MSyr: On the Sunday of the Resurrection, at the third hour, there was a violent earthquake and Batnan of Serug collapsed, along with the ciborium and the two outer sides of the Great Church at Edessa. Mu'awiya ordered that the fallen parts be rebuilt.** They say that he had stayed (at Edessa) and had had a dream announcing the ruin of 'Ali and the confirmation of his own kingship and that for this reason he ordered the church to be rebuilt.

*Chron 1234:* On the Sunday of the Resurrection there was a great earthquake and Serug collapsed, along with the ciborium and the two outer sides of the Great Church at Edessa. Mu'awiya ordered that the fallen parts be rebuilt.

Cf. *Chron 819*, 12: There was a violent earthquake and many places in Syria were destroyed. Batnan of Serug collapsed, and was cast down and obliterated, as also was one side of the ancient church of Edessa. (It occurred) on the Sunday of the Resurrection at the third hour.

#### (680) The death of Mu'awiya and accession of Yazid<sup>446</sup>

Theophanes: Mu'awiya, the premier<sup>447</sup> of the Saracens, died on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the month of May, indiction 1. He had been military commander for twenty years and emir for twenty-four years. His son Yazid (Izid) assumed power.<sup>448</sup>

on in the sentence Vasiliev reads Qatnan (which is what the manuscript has), but comparison with Theophanes and the Syriac texts suggests this should be read as 'Batnan' (in the district of Serug, in the region of Osrhoene, north Mesopotamia, not far from Edessa).

446 Theophanes, 356; Agapius, 493; Msyr 11.XV, 444/468 (AG 992/680–81 and AH 63/682–83); *Chron 1234*, 288. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 672 (Rajab AH 60/April–May 680).

447 *Prōtosymboulos*. The term *symboulos* appears in an inscription of 662 from Gadara (modern Hammāt al-Gader on the Israel/Jordan border) and also in a number of seventh-century papyri with the sense of governor. Presumably, then, *prōtosymboulos* signifies something like chief governor. For other examples of its use see Kazhdan, 'Barlaam and Ioasaph', 1203–4, 1208–9.

448 The sixth caliph of the Muslims; he reigned AH 60–64/680–83; see *EI*, 'Yazid I b. Mu'awiya'; Lammens, *Yazid*.



Agapius: Mu'awiya died after having reigned for twenty years and having been emir before that for twenty more years. He died on Sunday, 6 May, in the year AG 991 (680). They buried him at Damascus and Yazid ibn Mu'awiya reigned after him for three years and five months.

MSyr: **Mu'awiya died at Damascus. He had governed Syria for twenty-one years**, fifteen in the days of 'Uthman and six in opposition to 'Ali, **and he ruled as king** universally over all the kingdom of the Arabs **for twenty years. His son Yazid ruled after him** for three years and six months.

*Chron 1234*: **Mu'awiya**, king of the Arabs, **died** and they buried him **at Damascus. He had governed Syria**, as head of the army, **for twenty-one years and he ruled as king for twenty** more years. **His son Yazid ruled after him** in Damascus.

#### (680–81) The Sixth Ecumenical Council<sup>449</sup>

Theophanes: The holy and ecumenical Sixth Council of 289 holy bishops and fathers assembled at Constantinople at the behest of the pious king Constantine.

Agapius: An assembly of bishops was convened at Constantinople at the behest of Constantine. They numbered 189 bishops and it was called the Sixth Council. Agathon, head of (the Church of) Rome, wrote stating the agreement of his doctrine with the doctrine of the 120 bishops who did not attend the Council. They enacted canons which the Chalcedonians alone accepted to the exclusion of the other Christian groups.

MSyr: After the death of Constans, when his three sons were reigning, in the year 12 of their reign, which is AG 992 (680–81) and AH 60 (679–80), the synod that is called the Sixth was convened at Constantinople.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

449 Theophanes, 360; Agapius, 493–94 (Yazid, year 1/680–81); MSyr 11.XII, 433–34/451–52, who says quite a lot about it, though in a negative vein. The council convened in Constantinople on 7 November 680 and adjourned on 16 September 681. Theophanes is probably mistaken in the number of attending bishops that he gives, since only 157 were at the final session; see Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 277–82.

#### (681–82) Constantine deposes his brothers<sup>450</sup>

Theophanes: Constantine expelled from the imperial dignity his brothers, Heraclius and Tiberius, and reigned alone with his son Justinian.

Agapius: Constantine removed his brothers from rule and reigned alone. The patricians of Rome permitted him to do this as he had kept them satisfied, all except for one patrician, called Leo, who did not permit this and was not content with him. He said that it was not allowed for him (Constantine) to depose persons who had ruled over us for all this time. Constantine ordered that his tongue, hands and feet be cut off and that his brothers be exiled to an island in the sea.

MSyr: Constantine became proud and disregarded his pact with his brothers **because he had a son, Justinian**, who was nicknamed 'the arrogant'. That king **thought that** this latter was **worthy of the rule**. Removing from his eyes the fear of God and braving shame, he dismissed **his brothers** from the rule though they had committed no fault. He subdued the **leading men** by **gifts**, but one of the notables, **Leo, said: 'It is not right** for those who **have ruled** over us to be dispossessed and dismissed when they have done no wrong. **I will not give my support** to that.' Thereupon **the king** Constantine **ordered that his tongue, hands and feet be severed. The people**<sup>451</sup> came out to see him and **he went off shouting: 'A trinity rules in heaven and a trinity rules on earth; I will not deny the trinity in heaven nor reject the trinity on earth.'** While he was shouting out these words, he **received his punishment**. Constantine summoned the **Roman aristocracy** and when they were assembled he **said** (to his brothers): **'Tiberius and you, Heraclius, what do you say that I am – your brother or your king? If you say king, I will address you as my brothers; but if you say brother, I will know that you are my enemies.'** They replied: **'We will not refrain from calling you our bigger and elder brother, but we will never call you our king, for we reign with you.'** They spoke thus because they had **confidence that the senators** would support them, but they, seduced and

450 Theophanes, 360; Agapius, 494; MSyr 11.XIII, 437/455–56; *Chron 1234*, 288–89. See Head, *Justinian II*, 24–26, who remarks that Theophanes is probably mistaken in suggesting that Justinian became co-emperor with his father, and indeed Agapius and Dionysius simply state that Constantine ruled alone. On the patrician who opposed Constantine see *PMBZ*, 'Leon' 4246.

451 *Dīmiyūs*: from Greek *dēmos*; emended, without explanation, by the editor *Chron 1234* to *dīmasiyūs*.



blinded by bribes, were on the side of Constantine. Thus **strengthened**, he **dismissed** his brothers and **ruled** alone.

*Chron 1234*: Constantine cast out his brothers from the rule **because he had a son**, an **arrogant** youth whose name was **Justinian**. His father **thought that** this latter was **worthy of** the dignity of **the rule** and so he plotted to cast off **his brothers** and enthrone his son. He began to curry favour with the Romans, now with flattery and **gifts**, now with deceit and cunning subterfuge. Most of the **leading men** of the Romans he won over to his designs, but there was a certain **Leo**, a valiant and distinguished man, who did not accede to the will of the king. Rather he **said**: '**It is not right** to reject now men who **have ruled** alongside the king. Even our gold currency has three busts portrayed on it. **I will not give my support** nor will I consent.' **The king ordered that his tongue be severed** and as **he went off** followed by the people, he said shouting: '**A trinity rules in heaven and a trinity rules on earth. I will not deny the trinity in heaven nor reject the trinity on earth**'. While he was shouting out these words at the top of his voice he **received his punishment**. After this the king assembled **the Roman aristocracy** and brought before them his brothers, **saying** to them: '**Tiberius and you Heraclius, what do you say that I am – your brother or your king? If (you say) your king, I will call you my brothers; but if you say your brother, I will know that you are my enemies.**' They answered him, saying: '**We will certainly not refrain from calling and addressing you as our elder brother, but we will never acknowledge you as our king, for we reign with you.**' They spoke thus as **they had confidence in the senators**, but when it transpired that these were now against them, not for them, the king, now **strengthened** against them, **dismissed** them from the rule.

{ **Yazid begins to make a canal**: MSyr: Yazid, king of the Arabs, assembled numerous workmen, that is, stonemasons, and sought to bring a canal to Sahsahna.<sup>452</sup> When he had set many to work, he met his end. He died and the waters did not flow out. }<sup>453</sup>

<sup>452</sup> Unidentified. A canal on a slope of Mount Qasiyun, on the north side of Damascus, is said to have been commissioned by Yazid I (Yaqut, s.v. 'Baradā', 'Rabwa'; Katbi, *Land Tax*, 71–72). Palmer, WSC, 198 n. 498, suggests Sahsahna is Clysmā, at the northern end of the Gulf of Suez, by the Red Sea.

<sup>453</sup> MSyr, 11.XV, 444/470.

**(683–84) The death of Yazid and the second Arab civil war**<sup>454</sup>

Theophanes: The impostor Mukhtar<sup>455</sup> (Mouchtar) rebelled and became master of Persia. He called himself a prophet. The Arabs were troubled. | Yazid died. The Arabs of Yathrib (Ethribos) were troubled and rose up under the leadership of a certain 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr (Abdelas son of Zouber).<sup>456</sup> The Phoenicians<sup>457</sup> and Palestinians gathered at Damascus and came as far as Gabitha to Hassan (Asan),<sup>458</sup> emir of Palestine. They laid their hands on Marwan (Marouam), whom they appointed leader, and he was emir for nine months.<sup>459</sup> When he died, his son 'Abd al-Malik (Abimelech)<sup>460</sup> succeeded to the power; he was emir for twenty-one years and a half. He captured the rebels and slew 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr, as well as Dahhak (Dadachos).<sup>461</sup>

<sup>454</sup> Theophanes, 360–61; Agapius, 494–97; Msyr 11.XV, 444–45/468–69 (AG 995/683–84); *Chron 1234*, 289–92. For Dionysius I give the account of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 197–99), since Msyr abbreviates the story substantially. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 734–35 (Rabi' I AH 64/November 683; Yazid's death), 736 (Dhu l-Qa'da 64/June 684: Marwan proclaimed caliph), 737 (end 64/early 65: battle of Marj Rahit), 756 (Ramadan 65/April 685: Marwan's death). On the second Arab civil war see Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, and Rotter, *Die Umayyaden*.

<sup>455</sup> He was a member of the important west Arabian tribe of Thaqif and rebelled against the Umayyads, claiming to be acting on behalf of Muhammad ibn al-Hanfiyya, a son of 'Ali by a woman of the tribe of Hanifa (not by Fatima, daughter of the prophet Muhammad, as were Hasan and Husayn). See *EI*, 'al-Mukhtar b. Abi 'Ubayd'; Inloes, 'Mukhtar al-Thaqafi'.

<sup>456</sup> He was from a prominent family of Quraysh; he claimed the caliphate 'out of zeal for the house of God', as a contemporary Mesopotamian monk put it (John bar Penkaye, 155), claiming to be a defender of the Muslim sanctuary in Mecca and wishing to bring the seat of the caliphate back to Medina. See *EI*, 'Abdallah b. al-Zubayr'; Robinson, 'Abd al-Malik', 31–48 (who regards Ibn al-Zubayr as the *de facto* caliph).

<sup>457</sup> Meaning citizens of the province of Phoenicia; it is interesting that the Roman names for the provinces are still used so long after the provinces themselves had passed out of Roman/Byzantine control.

<sup>458</sup> Hassan ibn Malik ibn Bahdal, a chief of the tribe of Kalb, which had been powerful in the region of southern Syria before Islam and now strongly supported the Umayyads. For Gabitha see n. 165 above.

<sup>459</sup> Yazid I's son Mu'awiya ruled for a few weeks as the seventh caliph, though he was not universally recognised, before Marwan ibn al-Hakam took over as the eighth caliph, reigning from June AH 64/684 to April 65/685; see *EI*, 'Mu'awiya II b. Yazid' and 'Marwan I b. al-Hakam'.

<sup>460</sup> The ninth caliph of the Muslims; he reigned AH 65–86/685–705; see *EI*, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan'; Robinson, 'Abd al-Malik'.

<sup>461</sup> Dahhak ibn Qays, a chief of the important clan of Fihri, of the tribe of Quraysh; see *EI*, 'al-Dahhak b. Kays al-Fihri'.



Agapius: Yazid ibn Mu'awiya died. Mukhtar the Liar appeared in Kufa before the death of Yazid; he claimed prophecy and collected many followers. Since, when Yazid died, he left no adult son to rule in his place, civil war broke out and the Arabs split into many factions. Those in Yathrib and Iraq made 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr king over them, as also did those in Mesopotamia. Those in the Syrias<sup>462</sup> and Palestine remained loyal, on account of their partisanship, to the family of Mu'awiya, and called for them (to rule). Then Dahhak ibn Qays gathered many troops, came to Damascus and gave out that he was fighting for 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr. The Arabs of Mesopotamia also called for 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr. Each one proceeded to take a region which they defended and fought for. Mukhtar took control in Kufa. Marwan ibn al-Hakam came up from Yathrib and brought his sons with him. He headed for Damascus. News of his coming reached the sons of Yazid ibn Mu'awiya; they and their freedmen, along with those Arabs and freedmen who obeyed them, gathered before him. Marwan said to them: 'O people, I am an old man, my body is weak and emaciated and my bones are fragile. But when I heard of the discord among you I put myself forward and staked my life and used my high rank to make peace between you. I thought that it would not be right or just for me, as regards what is between me and God, to ignore their plight, when I see them fragmented, and not to make peace between them, to reunite them, to encourage them all to pledge allegiance and obedience to one man among them. If you like that, then do what I say to you. Bring me three arrows and affix on them the names of three men from among you. Hand the arrows to someone outside the assembly and tell him to shake the arrows well and then to take one of them and hand it to the assembly. Whoever's name comes out shall be the one to rule over us.' When the people heard that, his words convinced them; they accepted his counsel and approved his advice. Hassan ibn Malik was chosen (as the outsider to the assembly) from the family of Mu'awiya, one of their close circle, governor over Palestine and Jordan.<sup>463</sup> He accepted and consented. Then Marwan ibn al-Hakam, 'Amr ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As<sup>464</sup> and other men<sup>465</sup>

<sup>462</sup> There seems to be a copying error here, as 'the Syrias' is written twice. For the significance of this word see n. 64 above.

<sup>463</sup> Hassan ibn Malik's aunt, Maysun, married Mu'awiya and was the mother of Yazid I; see *EI*, 'Hassan b. Malik'; Crone, *Slaves*, 93–94.

<sup>464</sup> A leading Umayyad and a nephew of the caliph Marwan; see *EI*, 'Amr b. Sa'id b. al-'As... known as al-Ashdak'.

<sup>465</sup> Since there are only three arrows, one should perhaps read 'another man' here. Either 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr is meant, as is stated by *Chron 1234*, or else Yazid I's son Khalid, who had been named as Marwan I's heir along with 'Amr ibn Sa'id and was initially favoured by

of Quraysh came together and affixed their names to the three arrows. They handed the arrows to Hassan ibn Malik, who took them with his hand and shook them up well. He picked out one arrow and threw it into the midst of the assembly. It was inspected and on it was the name of Marwan ibn al-Hakam and so they hailed him as king.<sup>466</sup> When it reached Dahhak ibn Qays that Marwan ibn al-Hakam was now king, he travelled in disguise with a small group of his tribe and companions until he entered the camp of Marwan to see matters for himself. When he got right into the camp, one of Hassan ibn Malik's men recognised him and brought him to Marwan. He pledged allegiance unwillingly, but when night gave him cover he slipped away to his own camp. They looked for him in the morning, but could not find him. Marwan arose with his troops seeking Dahhak and they encountered him at Marj Rahit.<sup>467</sup> They fought and Marwan killed him and most of his men. The survivors pledged allegiance to Marwan. He returned to Damascus and settled in it; he married the wife of Yazid ibn Mu'awiya and lived in her residence. Marwan determined to travel to Egypt to receive the allegiance of its people,<sup>468</sup> but some illness afflicted him and he died after ruling for nine months. His son 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan ruled after him for twenty-two years, starting from year 65 of the Arabs and AG 996 (684–85).

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron 1234*, though he appends the following passage which is not in *Chron 1234*: '(After the death of Marwan ibn al-Hakam) the kingdom of the Arabs was once again split between many chiefs. At the same time as 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan was proclaimed king by them, in the region of Babylon there arose another whose name was 'Abdallah. A certain Bar Hobab<sup>469</sup> seized Resh'aina and ruled in opposition;

Hassan ibn Malik as successor to Mu'awiya II. The latter option would perhaps make more sense, for then it would simply be the Umayyads casting lots among themselves for a successor to the rule. For this practice in Islam see Crone and Silverstein, 'Lot-casting'.

<sup>466</sup> Muslim sources agree that there was a conference at Gabitha convened by Hassan ibn Malik, but do not report the drawing of lots between the main contenders for the caliphate. It is, however, quite possible that this version of events derives from a Muslim report that has not come down to us.

<sup>467</sup> A *marj* signifies grazing lands; the reference here is to the plains around Damascus. The battle occurred at the end of AH 64 or beginning of 65; that is, in the summer of 684; see *EI*, 'Mardj Rahit'.

<sup>468</sup> Muslim sources commonly refer to the people (*ahl*) of such and such a province, but in this early period often only the Arab troops stationed there are meant, not the wider population, and this is most likely what is meant here.

<sup>469</sup> I.e. 'Umayr ibn al-Hubab al-Sulami; see Crone, *Slaves*, 107–8.



Burayd<sup>470</sup> ruled in Nisibis; 'Amr ibn Sa'id (al-Ashdaq) took Damascus and proclaimed revolt in it; and a certain Zufar<sup>471</sup> was in Circesium.'

*Chron 1234:* Yazid, king of the Arabs and son of Mu'awiya, died after a reign of three years and five months. At this time a man called Mukhtar, a lying impostor and a hypocrite who said of himself that he was a prophet, rebelled in the land of 'Aqula. Because Yazid left no son old enough to reign as king, there was commotion among the Arabs. Those in the east and in Yathrib made king over them a certain 'Abdallah ibn Zubayr, whereas those in Damascus and Palestine remained loyal to the house of Mu'awiya and waited for one of Yazid's sons to grow up and become king. Those in Phoenicia and in Syria, however, made Dahhak ibn Qays king over them. This Dahhak came to Damascus, pretending to be fighting on behalf of Ibn Zubayr, whereas in fact he wanted to seize power for himself. As for Mukhtar, he would not be subjected either to Ibn Zubayr or to those who belonged to the house of Mu'awiya. In the midst of this commotion one of the Quraysh emerged from Yathrib, a man by the name of Marwan ibn al-Hakam, and came with his sons to Damascus and took up residence in the palace of Yazid. Having summoned those who had been attached to Yazid, the leading men of Damascus and the freedmen of Mu'awiya, he addressed them as follows: 'Listen to me, my comrades. I am an old man – the oldest of all the Quraysh at the present time. I have come here from Yathrib in order, with God's help, to unite the two sides, for it is not right that members of the same community should be enemies of one another. All should give their consent to one man, who is chosen by God. So, if you approve, let us choose three men and write their names on three arrows, and let those arrows be placed in the hands of someone innocent of the plan. Let him then shuffle them in his hand and cast one of them into the midst (of everyone), and whichever name is found on that arrow, let us make that man our king.' When the men of the family of Mu'awiya heard these words from Marwan, they applauded him and resolved to put this plan into practice. They went to Jabiya to find Hassan ibn Malik, the emir of Jordan, for he was a supporter of the family of Mu'awiya. They told him what Marwan had suggested and he agreed with what they had said. He wrote three names on three arrows:

470 This Burayd (*bwryd'*) is likely to be the same as the Abu Qarib Yazid ibn Abi Sakhr of the Muslim sources (see Rotter, *Die Umayyaden*, 216); Burayd and Yazid are written with the same letter shapes in Arabic script and are only distinguished by dots.

471 Zufar ibn al-Harith al-Kilabi, a chief of the tribe of 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'a; see Crone, *Slaves*, 108–9.

the name of 'Amr ibn Sa'id, the name of 'Abdallah ibn Zubayr, and the name of Marwan ibn al-Hakam himself. Then Hassan ibn Malik took the arrows in his hand and shuffled them. He cast out one of them and it turned out to have the name of Marwan ibn al-Hakam on it. Immediately they gave him the right hand of allegiance and made him king. When Dahhak heard what had been done, he came to Jabiya with a few men and approached the camp of Marwan and Hassan like a spy, but he was apprehended and brought before Marwan and give allegiance to him against his will. But when night came, he escaped and returned to his camp. At dawn, when his absence was discovered, Marwan left Jabiya and went after him. He did battle with him and Dahhak was killed. After that his companions swore allegiance to Marwan. The latter then entered Damascus, married Yazid's widow and established himself as king. Afterwards Marwan prepared to go to Egypt, since it had not yet submitted to his authority. However, Marwan reigned for less than one year and died in Damascus. He was succeeded by his son 'Abd al-Malik in AG 996 (684–85).

#### Famine and plague in Syria<sup>472</sup>

Theophanes: There was a famine and a great plague in Syria. | There was a famine in Syria and many men migrated to the Roman country.

Agapius: There befell people severe famine and plague.

MSyr: There was a famine on the earth so severe that men ate beasts, including all the unclean animals. | There was a cruel famine, during which the grain prices rocketed throughout Syria, to the point that wheat was sold at one modius<sup>473</sup> for three gold coins. Men ate bread made of lentils, peas, barley and other grains.

*Chron 1234:* not recorded

472 Theophanes, 361 | 364; Agapius, 497; MSyr 11.XI, 430/446 | 11.XVI, 447/474–75 (the second notice is given amid events around AG 1005/693–94 as having occurred 'seven years earlier'). There would appear to have been two famines, one of 683–84 (cf. *Ehresh Inscription*, s.a. AG 995) and one of 686–87 (cf. John bar Penkaye, 162, AH 67).

473 A measure of dry capacity used for seed; ca. 8.5 litres, 0.25 bushels.



**(685) Constantine IV dies and is succeeded by Justinian II**<sup>474</sup>

Theophanes: The pious king Constantine died after a reign of seventeen years and Justinian, his son, became king.

Agapius: Constantine, king of the Romans, died and Justinian reigned after him for ten years.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: Constantine, son of Constans, died after a reign of sixteen years and was succeeded by his son Justinian.

**(685) 'Abd al-Malik makes peace with Byzantium**<sup>475</sup>

Theophanes: 'Abd al-Malik assumed power over the nation. As the Mardaïtes were attacking the regions of Lebanon and the plague was raging, the same 'Abd al-Malik sent ambassadors to the king begging the peace that had been requested in the days of Mu'awiya and covenanted to provide as tribute the same 365,000 gold pieces, 365 slaves and likewise 365 thoroughbred horses. 'Abd al-Malik sent emissaries to Justinian to ratify the peace and it was concluded on these terms: that the king should remove the host of the Mardaïtes from Lebanon and prevent their incursions; that 'Abd al-Malik should give to the Romans every day 1000 gold coins, a horse and a slave; and that they would share in equal parts the tax revenue of Cyprus, Armenia and Iberia.<sup>476</sup> The king sent the *magistrîanus*<sup>477</sup> Paul to 'Abd al-Malik to ratify the agreement and a written guarantee was drawn up and witnessed. After being honourably rewarded, the *magistrîanus* returned home. The king sent orders to receive the Mardaïtes, 12,000 of them.

<sup>474</sup> Theophanes, 361; Agapius, 497; MSyr 11.XVI, 446–47/473; *Chron 1234*, 292. Cf. Nicephorus, §37 ('He died in the seventeenth year of his reign'). See ODB, 'Justinian II, king (685–95 and 705–11)'; Head, *Justinian II*.

<sup>475</sup> Theophanes, 361 | 363; Agapius, 497 and 104b; MSyr 11.XV, 445–46/469 and 11.XVI, 447/473; *Chron 1234*, 292 (AG 997/685–86). Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 148–49 (7 July AH 65/ AG 995/685), 150 (AH 69/AG 999/688). See Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 122–23; Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, 115–26.

<sup>476</sup> That is, Caucasian Iberia, the name by which the Romans referred to the ancient Georgian kingdom of Kartli, roughly equivalent to the eastern and southern parts of modern Georgia.

<sup>477</sup> An agent of the central government under the jurisdiction of the 'Master of the Offices' (*magister officorum*).

Agapius: 'Abd al-Malik wrote asking him (Justinian) for a peace treaty. He (Justinian) agreed on the condition that the truce would be for ten years; that Justinian would remove the Romans who were in Mount Lebanon and return them to the land of the Romans; that 'Abd al-Malik would pay to Justinian every day 1000 gold coins, a horse and a slave in compensation for the Romans removal of those in Mount Lebanon; that the island of Cyprus should be shared between the Romans and the Arabs, half each.<sup>478</sup> Armenia was not to be divided; rather each one (Justinian and 'Abd al-Malik) would send word to their respective governors over it that they should contest it (in battle), and whichever side was victorious would get Armenia and the vanquished would get nothing. They agreed on that and then Justinian dispatched to 'Abd al-Malik a scribe of his, called Paul, to take his own copy of what had been agreed upon and to have it witnessed by honest men. When Paul came before 'Abd al-Malik, the latter ordered that he be treated honourably and that a copy of what had been agreed upon be written out, and he had lawyers and judges of his kingdom witness it. Then he sealed the document and handed it to Paul, who directed it to his master. (In return) Justinian removed the Romans who were in Mount Lebanon, whose number had reached 12,000, besides women and children. Once the peace treaty was in place, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan dispatched 'Ubaydallah ibn Ziyad against Mukhtar the Liar (see next notice). King Justinian had already sent to Armenia a patrician called Leo, while 'Abd al-Malik had sent 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Hisham. The two met in battle and 'Abd al-Rahman was defeated. All the Arabs were killed and Armenia belonged to the Romans for ten years, together with Gurzan, Arzan and Azerbaijan.<sup>479</sup>

MSyr: **'Abd al-Malik**, when he saw all these things (insurgencies) going on, battles surrounding him on all sides and especially the pressure from the Mardaïtes in Lebanon, desired to make **peace** with the Romans. Justinian consented to make **peace for ten years. It was agreed between them that he would remove the Mardaïtes from Lebanon and withhold his troops from the land of the Arabs.** In exchange for these things 'Abd al-Malik

<sup>478</sup> Vasiliev, 497, says that fols. 104v–106v, which cover events from this point on until mid-way through the notice on Justinian and the Khazars (under the year 705 below), are 'stuck together and so unreadable', and Cheikhov, 355, says that 'they have been effaced' (*deleta sunt*). Though still a little unclear, they are now mostly readable (see Appendix 3).

<sup>479</sup> Gurzan is to the north, within modern Georgia, and Arzan is to the south, in modern south-east Turkey. Azerbaijan in the Late Roman/Early Islamic period referred to what is now the modern province of Azerbaijan in north-west Iran. In Agapius Arzan is written *Aşân*, but MSyr makes it likely that Arzan is the correct reading.



would give every day to the Romans 1000 gold coins, a horse and a slave. It was also agreed between them that Cyprus would be subject to the Romans and the Arabs and would pay tribute to both sides. Armenia would belong to the Romans, including Gurzan and Arzan, and also the southern part of Media, that is, Azerbaijan. The king removed the Mardaites from Lebanon and brought them into Roman territory; they numbered 12,000.

*Chron 1234*: In the first year that he (Justinian) assumed the rule, 'Abd al-Malik wrote to him about peace. He demanded that he (Justinian) remove those Mardaites from Mount Lebanon and keep his troops out of the land of the Arabs. It was agreed between them that the Mardaites would leave Lebanon and that the peace would be for ten years. 'Abd al-Malik would give every day to the Romans 1000 gold coins, a horse and a slave until the expiry of the ten years. Moreover, Cyprus would pay tribute to both sides. The Mardaites numbered 12,000 in Mount Lebanon, not including runaway levies and slaves.

Cf. *Chron 819*, 13: In the year 996 (684–85) Marwan died and 'Abd al-Malik, his son, became king after him for twenty-one years; this man made peace with the Romans for three years and he paid them tribute every day of 1000 gold coins and one Arabian horse.

*Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §31: Marwan sent envoys and requested beseechingly from Constantine Augustus that a peace be granted to him. A peace of nine years was granted to him on these conditions: that the king of the Saracens release to their own lands unharmed the captives and deserters found in all the provinces of the Saracens and pay to the Roman king the quantity of 1000 gold coins of proven weight, one girl, one hairy Arab mule (and) a silk (garment) daily without interruption for nine years in succession.

#### (685–92) 'Abd al-Malik quells his opponents<sup>480</sup>

Theophanes: 'Abd al-Malik sent Ziyad (Ziados), the brother of Mu'awiya, to Persia against the impostor and usurper Mukhtar. Ziyad was slain by

<sup>480</sup> Theophanes, 363–65; Agapius, 104v–105r; Msyr 11.XV, 446/469–70; *Chron 1234*, 292–93. Cf. Eutychius (Cheikho), 2.40. Agapius adds here a note about a severe famine in Syria in year 2 of 'Abd al-Malik (686–87), which is alluded to by Msyr 11.XVI, 447/474, and described at great length by John bar Penkaye, 162–64.

Mukhtar.<sup>481</sup> When 'Abd al-Malik heard of this he came to Mesopotamia and Sa'id<sup>482</sup> (Saidos) revolted against him. Turning back, he persuaded Sa'id by agreement to open Damascus, which the latter had previously seized, and then treacherously assassinated him. 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr sent his own brother Mus'ab (Mousabos) against Mukhtar. After they had joined battle Mukhtar was routed and fled to Syria. Mus'ab overtook him and slew him.<sup>483</sup> 'Abd al-Malik made an expedition against Mus'ab whom he vanquished and slew,<sup>484</sup> and he subjugated all of Persia. 'Abd al-Malik sent Hajjaj<sup>485</sup> to Mecca against 'Aballah ibn al-Zubayr (Zoubeir), whom Hajjaj slew there. Hajjaj subjugated for 'Abd al-Malik that country, which was opposed to him, and burned their pagan temple together with the idol they worshipped.<sup>486</sup> On this account 'Abd al-Malik made Hajjaj military governor of Persia. Thus Persia, Mesopotamia and the Great Arabia of Yathrib (Ethribos) submitted to 'Abd al-Malik and their internecine wars ceased. The Arab state was delivered from all wars and 'Abd al-Malik dwelt in peace after having subjugated everybody.<sup>487</sup>

Agapius: Once the peace treaty was in place, 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan dispatched 'Ubaydallah ibn Ziyad against Mukhtar the Liar, but Mukhtar

<sup>481</sup> The caliph Mu'awiya I had a foster brother named Ziyad (ibn Abihi), and it was his son, 'Ubaydallah ibn Ziyad, whom 'Abd al-Malik sent against Mukhtar; he was killed at a battle by the river Khazir near Mosul. Msyr 11.XV, 445/471, who seems to have his account from a different source, says the fighting by the river Khazir began on 22 September AG 996/685 and lasted a few days; Muslim sources variously date the conflict to 24 Dhu l-Hijja AH 66/22 July 686 and 10 Muharram 67/6 August 686 (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 65).

<sup>482</sup> This is 'Amr ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As al-Ashdaq, who was mentioned above (see n. 464 above); he revolted against 'Abd al-Malik in 688–89 (*ibid.*, 124–28).

<sup>483</sup> Mukhtar was killed in Ramadan AH 67/April 687 (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 783–84).

<sup>484</sup> Mus'ab died in autumn 71 or 72/690 or 691 (*ibid.*, 839–40; see also Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 134).

<sup>485</sup> Written Chagan (*Xagan*) in the text, though one would expect Chagag (*Xagag*). He was 'Abd al-Malik's notoriously tough viceroy of the east during the years 75–95/694–714; see EI, 'al-Hadjdjadj b. Yusuf', and Périer, *Vie d'al-Hadjdjadj*.

<sup>486</sup> This refers to the siege of the ka'ba, the complex in Mecca housing the black stone revered by Muslims, that took place ca. Dhu l-Qa'da 72/March 692 – Jumada I 73/September 692 (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 134–39).

<sup>487</sup> Theophanes, 365, gives this sentence its own entry, dating it to the fifth year of Justinian (689–90) and seventh of 'Abd al-Malik (691–92); *Chron 1234*, 296, says "Abd al-Malik was at last free from conflicts", referring to AG 1002/690–91, which is supported by *Chron Zuqnin*, 154. Of some significance here must be 'Abd al-Malik's minting of coins in AH 72/691–92, and certainly by this time he was in control of every region bar Arabia. But the 'year of unity' ('*ām al-jamā'a*') could only be proclaimed with the death in autumn 73/692 of the rival caliph Ibn al-Zubayr (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 140).



defeated him and killed him and his men. | Then 'Abd al-Malik went out to Circesium (Qarqisiya) and conquered it in this year. 'Amr ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As marched on Damascus and took possession of it and threw off allegiance to 'Abd al-Malik. When the latter heard of that, he returned to Damascus; 'Amr ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As went out to him under a guarantee of safety and 'Abd al-Malik entered Damascus. But then he ('Abd al-Malik) devised a scheme against him ('Amr) and killed him, and he recompensed the Arabs who were with him. | 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr dispatched his brother Mus'ab to Iraq and engaged Mukhtar the Liar; he defeated him and killed all his men.

MSyr: Now in peace with regard to the Romans, 'Abd al-Malik, king of the Arabs, fought each one of those in revolt against him. Gradually he defeated them all, captured them and subdued the cities. Ibn Zubayr **escaped; Hajjaj pursued him and cornered him in the house where they pray in Mecca. He set up siege engines, knocked over<sup>488</sup> the wall that enclosed the house and killed Ibn Zubayr; then he built the (prayer) house** once more.

*Chron 1234*: With peace concluded between the kingdoms 'Abd al-Malik sent Ziyad, the brother of Mu'awiya,<sup>489</sup> against the impostor Mukhtar. The outcome of the battle, however, was that Ziyad was killed. Hearing this, 'Abd al-Malik crossed the Euphrates into Mesopotamia. But when he reached Resh'aina he heard that 'Amr ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As had rebelled against him in Damascus. He returned to Damascus to besiege the city and launched a massive attack on it. 'Amr opened the gates on receiving 'Abd al-Malik's assurances that he would not be harmed. But later 'Abd al-Malik killed 'Amr by a ruse. Seeing that Ibn al-Zubayr was gaining support in the east, 'Abd al-Malik appointed two generals, his brother Muhammad (ibn Marwan) and Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, both powerful men, capable of shedding blood without the slightest remorse. To his brother Muhammad he gave authority over Mesopotamia, Mosul and all Armenia; to Hajjaj he entrusted the whole of Persia. The first city to which this Muhammad came was Edessa, where he took up residence after being received without resistance. Before long he had recovered the whole of northern Mesopotamia except for Nisibis, which was held by Burayd.<sup>490</sup> Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, meanwhile, went to Yathrib to fight 'Abdallah ibn Zubayr, and 'Abd al-Malik sent word to his brother

488 'qā in Chabot's edition, but probably one should read 'qrl' 'demolish', as in *Chron 1234*.

489 Note that *Chron 1234* makes the same mistake as Theophanes over Ziyad, confusing him with his son 'Ubaydallah.

490 Yazid ibn Abi Sakhr; see n. 470 above.

Muhammad to muster a force and go to Hajjaj's assistance. When they went out to engage with 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr, the latter was defeated, his army destroyed and his general, Ibrahim ibn al-Ashtar, slain.<sup>491</sup> 'Abdallah himself **escaped** with a few men and sought sanctuary in the ka'ba, that is, the house of worship of the prophet **where they pray in Mecca. Hajjaj pursued him there and cornered him in the house; he set up siege engines** against it and demolished **the wall that enclosed the house**, thus enabling his men to rush in, capture 'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr and kill him. They cut off his head and sent it to 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan; then **they built the (prayer) house** again. After this, 'Abd al-Malik gave Hajjaj control of Kufa, Yathrib, Mecca and all Iraq.<sup>492</sup>

#### (692) Justinian violates the peace<sup>493</sup>

Theophanes: Justinian foolishly broke the peace with 'Abd al-Malik, for he strove in his folly to move the population of the island of Cyprus and refused to accept the minted coin that had been sent by 'Abd al-Malik, because it was of a new kind that had never been made before. As the Cypriots were crossing, a multitude of them drowned or died of illness, and the remainder returned to Cyprus. When 'Abd al-Malik had been informed of this, he diabolically feigned to be begging that the peace should not be broken and

491 At Maskin, just north of Baghdad, in Jumada I 72/October 691.

492 Dionysius continues (MSyr 11.XVI, 447/473, 448–49/474; *Chron 1234*, 293–94), most likely from a different source: 'Given authority over Persia, Hajjaj began to wreak destruction pitilessly. He even murdered the leading men of the Arabs and looted their houses; and Muhammad ibn Marwan did the same in his province, slaughtering leaders and showing no mercy. He also framed charges against the leaders of the Christians and began killing them too and looting their houses. He murdered Mardanshah, son of Zarnosh, and his son, who were administrators of Nisibis, and Simeon, son of Nonnus of Haluga, by impaling them on wooden stakes... The administrator of Edessa, Anastasius, son of Andrew, he also murdered and appropriated all his possessions. Yet Christians still held office as scribes and administrators in the Arab territories', which is the occasion for a long digression into the immense wealth of Athanasius bar Gumaye, of the city of Edessa, right-hand man to 'Abd al-Malik's brother, 'Abd al-'Aziz, governor of Egypt, which Dionysius says he has taken from Daniel son of Samuel of Tur 'Abdin (called Daniel son of Moses of Tur 'Abdin in MSyr 10.XX, 378/358, unless they are different persons), his maternal grandfather (MSyr 11.XVI, 447–49/475–77; *Chron 1234*, 294–95).

493 Theophanes, 365–66 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §38); Agapius, 105rv ('Abd al-Malik, years 2 and 10); MSyr 11.XV, 446/470; *Chron 1234*, 296 (AG 1002/690–91). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 861–62; Ibn Khayyat, 267; Elias of Nisibis, 151–52 – all agreeing on AH 73/692.



that Justinian should accept his currency, seeing that the Arabs could not suffer the Roman imprint on their own currency; and inasmuch as the gold was paid by weight the Romans did not suffer any loss from the fact that the Arabs were minting new coin.<sup>494</sup> Justinian mistook his plea as a sign of fear, not understanding that their concern was to stop the incursions of the Mardaïtes and then break the peace under a seemingly reasonable pretext; which indeed came to pass. Justinian made a levy among the Slavs he had transplanted and raised an army of 30,000, whom he armed and named 'the Chosen People'... Being confident in them, he wrote to the Arabs that he would not abide by the written peace treaty... He advanced to Sebastopolis...<sup>495</sup> At first the Arabs were defeated, Muhammad (ibn Marwan), however, won over the commander of the Slavs, who were fighting on the Roman side, by sending him a pouch full of gold pieces and, after deceiving them with many promises, persuaded them to join their side together with 20,000 Slavs, and in this way caused the Romans to flee.

Agapius: Justinian raided the Slavs and enslaved thousands of them in number and brought them into his realm. Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik raided the Romans, took prisoners and returned.

MSyr: Justinian, king of the Romans, who had an insolent pride, did not allow Cyprus to belong to the Romans and the Arabs. He had its people taken off in the seventh<sup>496</sup> year of his reign. When 'Abd al-Malik heard this, he greatly censured him for violating the peace and for not desisting until the peace had expired. For this reason Muhammad (ibn Marwan), emir of Mesopotamia, invaded Roman territory. The Romans fought a battle with him near Caesarea in Cappadocia. The Slavs made an agreement with the Arabs and went away with them to Syria, some 7000. They settled them at Antioch and Cyrrhus,<sup>497</sup> gave them wives and distributed to them payments in money and kind.<sup>498</sup>

494 For an overview of this event and discussion as to the significance of the numismatic issues see Head, *Justinian II*, esp. 45–58, and Breckenridge, *Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II*, esp. 69–77, and more broadly Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, 127–60.

495 Modern Sulusaray in north-east Turkey, north-west of Sebasteia, north of Caesarea and south of Amasea.

496 This word is missing from Chabot's text, but it is present in the Aleppo manuscript.

497 An ancient city in northern Syria, north of Aleppo, very close to the modern border with Turkey.

498 *Gzūtā w-rūzīqā*: this corresponds to Arabic *jizya wa-rizq*. The latter word was rendered in Greek as *rouzikon* (the Syriac term perhaps derives from the Greek) and occurs in a number of seventh-century papyri in the sense of allowances for the army; the extant instances concern

*Chron 1234*: King Justinian evacuated the people of the island of Cyprus to prevent them from paying tribute to the Arabs according to the treaty. However, when they got in the ships and set sail the ships sunk and all of them were drowned in the waters. Those who survived the king settled in the city of Cyzicus. When 'Abd al-Malik heard that Justinian had violated the peace before its term had expired, he commanded his brother Muhammad, governor of Mesopotamia,<sup>499</sup> to invade Roman territory. The booty and the captives which he brought back from this raid were abundant.

{ 'Abd al-Malik builds in Mecca: Theophanes: 'Abd al-Malik ordered the rebuilding of the temple of Mecca and wanted to remove the columns of Gethsemane. Now Sergius, son of Mansur, a good Christian, who was treasurer and stood on close terms with 'Abd al-Malik, as well as his peer, Patricius, surnamed Klausys,<sup>500</sup> who was prominent among the Christians of Palestine, begged him not to do this, but to persuade Justinian, through their supplication, to send other columns instead of those; which indeed was done. }<sup>501</sup>

#### Smbat Bagratuni surrenders Armenia to the Arabs<sup>502</sup>

Theophanes: Smbat (Sabbatios), the patrician of Armenia,<sup>503</sup> on being

foodstuffs and blankets/cloaks (Mayerson, 'Rouzikon and Roga'), so the word may mean payments in kind (though new data could change this picture). *Jizya* came to mean the poll-tax paid by non-Muslims to Muslims, but in the seventh century it signified payments in general made by the conquered to the conquerors (whether in money or goods). Though one might at first think there is no difference between these categories (i.e. conquerors = Muslims), we do have evidence that non-Muslims fought in the Arab armies (see al-Qadi, 'Non-Muslims in the Muslim Army'), and indeed here there is no indication that the Slavs mentioned here converted to Islam. Mayerson explains *rouzikon* as 'a disbursement granted to Muslims as a theologically authorised entitlement' (*ibid.*, 128), but the fact that the Arabic word *rizq* appeared in religious contexts (notably in the Qur'an) does not mean that it only had theological significance.

499 *Shallītā d-bēt nahrayn* as opposed to MSyr's Arabic-derived phrase: *amīrā d-gazīrā*.

500 See PMBZ, 'Sarḡūn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Rūmī' 6510 (usually assumed to be the father of the famous Christian writer, John of Damascus, or at least belonging to the same family), 'Patrikios' 5755.

501 Theophanes, 365. This notice may well have been in TC, but omitted by Dionysius since it shows the Chalcedonian Sergius in a good light; otherwise it may have been inserted by the continuator of TC used by Theophanes.

502 Theophanes, 366; Agapius, 105r; *Chron 1234*, 296.

503 Namely Smbat VI Bagratuni, who changed sides a number of times between Byzantium and the Arabs; see Toumanoff, *Studies*, 341; PMBZ, 'Smbat Bagratuni' 6828.



informed of the defeat of the Romans (at Sebastopolis), delivered Armenia to the Arabs. Inner Persia, which is called Khurasan, also submitted to them.

Agapius: Smbat, one of the patricians of the Romans in Armenia, rebelled and killed Leo, Justinian's governor in charge of it, and delivered it to the Arabs. 'Abd al-Malik entrusted Iraq to Hajjaj and he made many conquests.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: A certain patrician of the Armenians called Smbat betrayed Armenia into the hands of Muhammad ibn Marwan.

#### The career of Shabib the Harurite<sup>504</sup>

Theophanes: There arose an adventurer by the name of Shabib (Sabinos), who killed many Arabs and nearly drowned Hajjaj himself in a river.

Agapius: Shabib the Harurite rebelled in the east; he wounded Hajjaj badly and did much evil in Iraq. The Azariqa came together and rebelled, seeking the caliphate (for themselves); Hajjaj sent Muhallab ibn Abi Sufra against them and he killed them.<sup>505</sup> (And in this same year) Shabib the Harurite was killed.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: A certain Ishmaelite Harurite or Rafidi,<sup>506</sup> called Shabib, invaded the territory of Hajjaj, committed many crimes and did a lot of

504 Theophanes, 366–67; Agapius, 105r (probably adding the information about the Azariqa from his Muslim source); *Chron 1234*, 296. TC, especially as represented by Agapius and Dionysius, is quite negative towards Shabib, presumably reflecting the Syrian viewpoint, whereas *Chron 819*, 14, representing the Mesopotamian viewpoint, calls Shabib 'a famous horseman and a heroic warrior' (though note that it wrongly places this notice under AG 1016/704–5). Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 153 (AG 1007/696); Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 188–90 (AH 77/696–97). See EI, 'Shabib b. Yazid'; Robinson, *Empires and Elites*, 114–26. On Hajjaj, viceroy of the East, see n. 485 above.

505 The Azariqa were a hardline sect of the Kharijites; Muhallab was a famous Arab general who was the founder of the influential family of the Muhallabids; see EI, 'Azārika', 'al-Muhallab ibn Abī Sufra'.

506 *Rāfiṭī*: this is a rendering of the Arab term *rāfiḍī*, meaning 'deserter' or 'renegade'; possibly Theophanes' *paraboulos*, 'adventurer', is an attempt to convey this. It was used of those who deserted 'Alī at Harura, that is, the first Kharijites, though it subsequently became appropriated by Shi'ites (EI, 'al-Rafida'). See Conrad, 'Theophanes', 27–28, 38–42.

killing. He even attempted to kill Hajjaj, who escaped by using his wits. No one seemed to be a match for this Harurite, but in the end Hajjaj found a way to drown him in the Euphrates.

#### (693) A solar eclipse<sup>507</sup>

Theophanes: There occurred an eclipse of the sun on the fifth of the month October, a Sunday, in the third hour, so that some of the brighter stars became visible.

Agapius: There was an eclipse of the sun.

MSyr: There was an eclipse of the sun in the month of October, on a Sunday, during the third and fourth hours; it was so dark that the stars came out.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### 'Abd al-Malik ordered a slaughter of pigs in Syria'<sup>508</sup>

Theophanes: There was a slaughter of pigs in Syria.

Agapius: 'Abd al-Malik ordered that the pigs in Syria, Assyria,<sup>509</sup> Mesopotamia and other countries be slaughtered and that none of them should be left in his kingdom.

MSyr: 'Abd al-Malik, king of the Arabs, ordered that crosses should be taken down and pigs should be killed.

*Chron 1234*: 'Abd al-Malik, ordered that pigs should be killed in the cities of Syria and in all Mesopotamia.

507 Theophanes, 367; Agapius, 105v (AM 10); Msyr 11.XVI, 446–47/474. This is also recorded by *Ehresh Inscription*, s.a. AG 1005 (693–94), Eutychius (Cheikho), 2.40 (AH 74/693), and Elias of Nisibis, 152 (Sunday, 29 Jumada I AH 74/5 October AG 1005); the time and date are confirmed by Schöve, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 137–42.

508 Theophanes, 367; Agapius, 105v (AM 10/694–95); Msyr 11.XVI, 447/475; *Chron 1234*, 296. Cf. *Chron 819*, 14 (AG 1015/713–14). See ODB, 'Leontios, king (695–98)'.

509 I translate *Sūriya* as Assyria so as to distinguish it from *al-Shām*, though they are overlapping terms, and the passage may be corrupt. See p. 200 and n. 886 below.



(695) The exile of Justinian and accession of Leontius<sup>510</sup>

Theophanes: ... They brought Justinian out into the Hippodrome through the curved section of the track (*sphendone*) and, after cutting off his nose and tongue, banished him to Cherson...<sup>511</sup> And they proclaimed Leontius emperor.

Agapius: Justinian was expelled from the rule after reigning for ten years. They cut off his nose (and exiled him) beyond the Bosphorus, (to) a city (beyond) the Pontus.<sup>512</sup> They made king in the city Leontius, who was one of his (Justinian's) generals, for three years.

MSyr: They (the nobles and leading men) came together against him, seized him, cut off his nose and imprisoned him. Then a man named Leontius reigned, in the year AG 1007 (695–96) and AH 77 (696–97).

*Chron 1234*: Since Justinian had mercilessly committed many atrocities against the leaders of the Romans, which they had endured for ten years, and since his fury had not ceased, they united against him. They laid hold of him, cut off his nose and sent him into exile beyond the Pontus. To replace him as king they chose an old man, sluggish in the administration of the affairs of state, the patrician Leontius, who had been in Armenia. This was in the year AG 1007 and year 12 of 'Abd al-Malik.

(697) 'Abd al-Malik strikes aniconic coins<sup>513</sup>

Theophanes: Justinian refused to accept the minted coin that had been sent by 'Abd al-Malik, because it was of a new kind that had never been made

510 Theophanes, 368–69 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §§40–41); Agapius, 105v (AM 10); MSyr 11.XVI, 447/473; *Chron 1234*, 297. Cf. *Chron 819*: 'In AG 1006 (694–5) the Roman forces marched to the valley of Antioch and they were met by Dinar ibn Dinar. He massacred them and few of them escaped. They returned to Roman territory in disgrace. In the same year the Romans rebelled against their king Justinian, cut off his nose and exiled him'; MSyr 11.XV, 446/470, also has this notice, though does not mention Dinar ibn Dinar, and Theophanes, 363, says that 'Abd al-Malik 'subjugated Antioch (Theopolis)'.  
511 In the south-western Crimaea, on the northern shore of the Black Sea, now in Ukraine.  
512 This sentence seems corrupt and my reconstruction is only very tentative.  
513 Theophanes, 365; MSyr 11.XVI, 447/473 (AG 1008/696–7, as also *Chron 819*, 13); *Chron 1234*, 296. Note that the connection made by Theophanes between 'Abd al-Malik's numismatic policy and Justinian's actions is quite probably his own invention; see Bates, 'First Century of Islamic Coinage', 247–48.

before.<sup>514</sup>

Agapius: not recorded.

MSyr: The Arabs began to strike gold and silver<sup>515</sup> and copper coins with no image on them, just letters alone.

*Chron 1234*: 'Abd al-Malik gave the order to strike silver and gold coins, of gold and silver, with no pictures on them, just writing in Arabic<sup>516</sup> on both sides. On one face they wrote the name of their prophet, Muhammad, and on the other side they wrote the name of 'Abd al-Malik. It is the practice of the Arab kings still now that each new king inscribes his name on the die.

Cf. *Chron 819*, 13: The Arabs struck gold and silver coins with no image on them, just letters.

Elias of Nisibis, 152–53: 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan gave the order to strike gold and silver coins with an Arabic impress.

(690s) Arab campaigns in Asia Minor<sup>517</sup>

Theophanes: Muhammad<sup>518</sup> made an expedition against the Roman country, taking along the Slav refugees who were acquainted with it, and took many prisoners. | Muhammad made an expedition against the Fourth Armenia and, after taking many captives, returned home. | Alidos<sup>519</sup> made an expedition against the Roman country and, after taking many captives, returned home. Sergius, the patrician of Lazica, son of Barnoukios, raised a rebellion and made Lazica<sup>520</sup> subject to the Arabs.

514 Theophanes interpolates this within his account of Justinian's violation of the peace, for which see above.

515 Here and in *Chron 1234*, *Chron 819* and Elias of Nisibis the same phrase, 'strike/struck gold and silver coins' (*ṭb' dīnārē w-zūzē*), is used. MSyr and *Chron 819* also use the same phrase: *d-layt b-hūn ṣalmāl* 'which had no image on them'.

516 *Kūbātā arabyāū*.

517 Theophanes, 367 | 368 | 370; Agapius, 105v. Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 74 (AH 77/697); and see Brooks, 'Arabs', 189 and 190. On Sergius see PMBZ, 'Sergios' 6543.

518 Agapius mentions Muhammad, son of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, but it is perhaps more likely to be Muhammad ibn Marwan, brother of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, who had been given control of Mesopotamia and Armenia in AH 73/692 (see EI, 'Muhammad b. Marwan').

519 Presumably Walid, son of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, as mentioned by Agapius.

520 The Laz people were (and still are) found around the eastern shores of the Black Sea; their kingdom of Lazica was independent in the sixth century, but subsequently submitted first to the Byzantines, and then to the Arabs.



Agapius: Muhammad son of 'Abd al-Malik raided the Romans, took prisoners and returned. | Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik raided the Romans and took many prisoners. Sergius the patrician raided the land of Lazica and pledged allegiance to the Arabs.

Dionysius: not recorded.

{A census of foreigners: MSyr: In the year 1009 (697–98) a census of foreigners<sup>521</sup> was made by 'Atiyya. He had many led off and repatriated.}<sup>522</sup>

**(698) Tiberius II Apsimarus becomes king<sup>523</sup>**

Theophanes: Apsimarus acceded to the Empire.

Agapius: One of the patricians of the Romans, called Apsimarus, from Cilicia, rebelled with a large army and came to Constantinople. He expelled King Leontius from the rule and seated himself on the throne.

MSyr: **Apsimarus came from Cilicia and removed Leontius from power. He did not harm him** at all, but reigned in his place. The affair happened as follows. This Apsimarus was a general, named Tiberius. The Slavs revolted against the Romans and since Leontius paid no attention to them they plundered and ravaged the lands of the Romans. Then Apsimarus marched against them, defeated and subjected them. That is why he became powerful, revolted and deposed Leontius, saying: 'Just as Justinian, because of his mismanagement of the Roman Empire, especially for pillaging Cyprus and breaking the peace with the Arabs, thus ruining many Roman lands, and other such things, was deprived of rule, so Leontius, though he had been enthroned for being one of the great men, has been cast out for lapsing into similar folly.'

*Chron 1234*: After three years (of the reign of Leontius) a certain man, called **Apsimarus, came from Cilicia** to Constantinople with a great army **and removed Leontius from power. He did not harm him**, but rather granted

<sup>521</sup> Meaning displaced persons, people not where they are registered. The reference is principally to peasants fleeing their land to escape tax liabilities and/or hoping to make a good living in the cities.

<sup>522</sup> MSyr, 11.XVI, 447/473. The first sentence is found with the same wording in *Chron 819*, 13. The 'Atiyya mentioned here may be 'Atiyya ibn Ma'bad al-Darani (d. ca. 740s), who was governor of the coastal regions of Syria for forty years; see al-Qadi, 'Population Census', 379–81.

<sup>523</sup> Theophanes, 371; Agapius, 105v; MSyr 11.XVI, 447–48/473 (AH 1010/698–99); *Chron 1234*, 297 (AG 1007/695–96). See ODB, 'Tiberius II, king (698–705)'.

him the privilege of living on his own in peace. So Apsimarus ruled over the Romans.

**A great plague<sup>524</sup>**

Theophanes: There was a great plague.

Agapius: not reported.

MSyr: There was a great plague to the extent that a third of the people of the world were wiped off the face of the earth.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

**(700–1) The revolt of 'Abd al-Rahman against Hajjaj<sup>525</sup>**

Theophanes: 'Abd al-Rahman (Abderachman) revolted in Persia, of which he became master, and drove Hajjaj out of there. | Muhammad, at the head of a multitude of Arabs, made an expedition against 'Abd al-Rahman. When he reached Persia, he joined forces with Hajjaj. They made war on 'Abd al-Rahman, whom they killed, and once again Persia was handed over to Hajjaj.

Agapius: A rebel called 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Ash'ath revolted in Iraq. Muhammad ibn Marwan marched out to him, fought him and killed him and his men.

MSyr: The Arabs of 'Aqula and Basra revolted against 'Abd al-Malik and fought against him. | There was a violent battle on the Tigris between the eastern Arabs and the western Arabs; the easterners were defeated.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

<sup>524</sup> Theophanes, 371; MSyr 11.XVII, 449/480. Cf. *Chron 819* (AG 1011/699–700); Elias of Nisibis, 154 (AH 79/698, 80/699); Ibn Khayyat, 278 (AH 80). MSyr gives AG 1016/704–5 (thus also *Chron Zuqnin*, 155), but situates the notice among those pertaining to ca. 700.

<sup>525</sup> Theophanes, 371; Agapius, 105v (AM 15/699–700); MSyr 11.XVII, 449–50/478, 450/480. MSyr is rather vague, but it seems certain he is referring to the revolt of 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath, a descendant of the famous south Arabian tribe of Kinda; the battle on the Tigris is presumably that of Dayr al-Jamajim, which took place between Ibn al-Ash'ath and Hajjaj near Kufa in AH 83/702). In Muslim sources the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath chiefly occupied the years AH 81–82/700–1; see Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 151–68; Hawting, *First Dynasty*, 67–70; Sayed, *Die Revolte*.



**The Romans invade the region of Samosata**<sup>526</sup>

Theophanes: The Romans invaded Syria and came as far as Samosata. They ravaged the surrounding country and killed, it is said, as many as 200,000 Arabs. They took much booty and many Arab captives and, after instilling great fear in them, returned home.

Agapius: The Romans raided Samosata and killed some 5000 men of the Arabs and captured at least 10,000 men.

MSyr: Tiberius, who is Apsimarus, sent an army of Romans against the Arabs. They invaded the region of Samosata and killed 5000 Arabs. They took captives, laid waste the country and then returned home.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

{**Death of Walid ibn 'Umar**: MSyr: In the year AG 1014 (702–3) the governor Walid ibn 'Umar died. He was succeeded by Harith ibn Ka'b and after him came Qurra ibn Sharik. Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik became governor of the region of Qinnasrin.}<sup>527</sup>

**'Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-Malik in Asia Minor**<sup>528</sup>

Theophanes: 'Abdallah made an expedition against the Roman country. He besieged Taranton<sup>529</sup> to no avail and returned home. He built up Mopsuestia

526 Theophanes, 371; Agapius, 105v; Msyr 11.XVI, 448/473–74.

527 Msyr 11.XVI, 449/474. Qurra ibn Sharik is well known as the governor of Egypt for Walid I during the years 90/709–96/714, since a large body of his letters on papyrus survive (see *EI*, 'Kurra b. Sharik'; Crone, *Slaves*, 125). He came from the region of Qinnasrin in northern Syria (see n. 273 above) and was apparently a governor there before 90/709, which is why Msyr mentions him here, but Walid ibn 'Umar and Harith ibn Ka'b are unknown. Maslama, son of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, was a governor of Qinnasrin before taking over from his uncle Muhammad as governor of Mesopotamia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in 91/710 (see *EI*, 'Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik').

528 Theophanes, 372; Agapius, 105v–106ar; Msyr 11.XVII, 449/477 (AG 1015/703–4) | 451/478 (AG 1017/705–6); *Chron 1234*, 297 (AG 1013/701–2). Cf. *Chron 819*, 13–14 (AG 1015/703–4); Caetani, *Chronographia*, 996 (AH 83/702), 1011 (AH 84/703); Ibn Khayyat, 289–90 and 292, and Baladhuri, 291 ('Abdallah captures the fortress of Sinan in the region of Mopsuestia, raids Turanda and rebuilds Mopsuestia/Masisa). Msyr's reference to Maslama may be a mistake for 'Abdallah; Maslama's substantial involvement in raids against Byzantium seems to have begun only in 86/705. On 'Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-Malik himself see Crone, *Slaves*, 124.

529 Taranton, or Turanda in Arabic and Syriac, is modern Derende, north-west of Melitene

and placed a guard therein.

Agapius: ('Abdallah ibn) 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan raided the Romans. He besieged a fort called *sṯws* and remained there for some time, but then returned without a conquest. In the same year 'Abd al-Malik ordered the (re) building of Mopsuestia and the installation of strongholds there, because it was in ruins.

MSyr: 'Abd al-Malik, king of the Arabs, sent Maslama to Mopsuestia, which he took. | The Arabians<sup>530</sup> **(re)built Mopsuestia**, which they had recently captured. They fortified it with very strong walls and other fine structures; they **stationed in it troops** and made it the border with the Romans. The king of the Arabs, 'Abd al-Malik himself, went there and died there, or, as others say, he was killed in this year.

*Chron 1234*: 'Abdallah, the son of 'Abd al-Malik, invaded Roman territory. He ravaged and plundered and then returned to Cilicia. He **(re)built Mopsuestia**<sup>531</sup> and **stationed in it** sufficient **troops** to guard it, then he returned.

**(703) Rebellion of Armenian leaders against the Arabs**<sup>532</sup>

Theophanes: The Armenian chieftains rebelled against the Saracens and killed the Saracens who were in Armenia. Once more they made contact with Apsimarus and brought the Romans into their country. Muhammad (ibn Marwan), however, made an expedition against them and killed many people. He subjugated Armenia to the Arabs and as for the Armenian chieftains he gathered them in one place and burned them alive.

Agapius: The people of Armenia shut themselves in their fortresses; Muhammad ibn Marwan marched out to them and defeated them and killed a group of Romans there. Then he assembled the patricians of Armenia, confined them in a great church and set fire to it, thus burning them, and he allowed their women to be taken as spoil.

in central Turkey. One assumes Agapius' *sṯws* is a mistake for Taranton/Turanda, though if so it is a major corruption.

530 Using the term *arabāyē* rather than the usual *ṯayyāyē*.

531 Using the Arab name Masisa whereas Msyr uses the classical name of Mopsuestia.

532 Theophanes, 372; Agapius, 106r; Msyr 11.XVI, 449/474; *Chron 1234*, 297. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 996–97 (rebellion: AH 83/703), 1010 (Arab response: AH 84/703); Ibn Khayyat, 291, and Baladhuri, 205 (burning of Armenian nobles in a church).



MSyr: Muhammad ibn Marwan gathered the Armenian leaders in one place and had them enter a church, which he then set on fire, burning them all to death.

*Chron 1234*: The Armenian leaders organised a revolt against the Arabs. Muhammad ibn Marwan went up and crushed the Romans who had come to Armenia and he also killed many Armenians. Then Armenia reverted to Arab control.

#### Arab expeditions against Cilicia<sup>533</sup>

Theophanes: Azar made an expedition against Cilicia at the head of 10,000 men. The king's brother, Heraclius,<sup>534</sup> met him and killed most of the enemy. The remainder he sent as captives to the king. | (The following year) Azidos son of Chounei made an expedition against Cilicia and laid siege to the fortress of Sision. The king's brother Heraclius fell on him and killed 12,000 Arabs in battle.

Agapius: Ashras raided the Romans. He encountered the king's brother, Heraclius, who defeated them and killed many of the Arabs and took captive the rest of them, bringing them back to Constantinople. | Yazid ibn al-Husayn raided the Romans; Heraclius engaged him and defeated him.

Dionysius: not recorded.

#### (705) Justinian and the Khazars<sup>535</sup>

Theophanes: Justinian managed to escape,<sup>536</sup> and having reached Daras,<sup>537</sup> he

533 Theophanes, 372; Agapius, 106r. Azidos son of Chounei is clearly Yazid ibn Hunayn – and Agapius' Yazid ibn Husayn needs to be emended here (*PMBZ*, 'Yazid ibn Hunain' 8596) – but Azar/Ashras is uncertain. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1022 (AH 85/704); Ibn Khayyat, 292 (AH 85: 'there were many casualties at Susanna', i.e. Sision, north-east of Mopsuestia in modern south central Turkey).

534 On Justinian's brother, Heraclius, see *PMBZ*, 'Herakleios' 2557.

535 Theophanes, 372–75 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §42); Agapius, 106rv and 498 (AM 16/700–1); MSyr 11.XVII, 450–51/478; *Chron 1234*, 297–98. Note that the story of the mission to bring Theodora to Constantinople is in all the accounts (and in Nicephorus). On the Khazars see most recently Golden et al., *Khazars*.

536 From his exile 'beyond the Pontus', as related in the notice above for the year 695.

537 In the uplands of the south-western portion of the Crimean peninsula, on the northern shore of the Black Sea.

requested an audience with the Khagan of the Khazars. On being informed of this, the latter received him with great honour and gave him in marriage his own sister Theodora. When Apsimarus heard of these matters, he wrote to the Khagan, promising many gifts if he would send him Justinian alive; if not, at least his head. The Khagan yielded to this request... (Justinian escapes when a servant of the Khagan tells Theodora of the plot)... Justinian then dispatched Stephen to Tervel, the lord of Bulgaria,<sup>538</sup> so as to obtain help to regain his ancestral empire and promised to give him many gifts and his own daughter as a wife... | (The next year) Justinian regained the rule and, after giving many gifts and imperial vessels to Tervel, dismissed him in peace. Apsimarus abandoned the city (of Constantinople) and fled to Apollonias, but was pursued, apprehended and brought to Justinian. Heraclius, too, was brought in chains from Thrace, together with all the commanders who supported his side, and all of them were impaled on the walls...<sup>539</sup> Justinian sent a fleet to bring his wife from the land of the Khazars and many ships sank together with their crews. When the Khagan heard this, he sent him this message: 'You fool, could you not have taken your wife on two or three ships without killing so great a multitude? Do you think that you are taking her, too, by war? Behold a son has been born to you. Send your emissaries and take them away.' So he sent the chamberlain Theophylact<sup>540</sup> and brought Theodora and her son Tiberius and crowned them and they reigned jointly with him.

Agapius: Justinian fled from the place to which he had been exiled and went to the Khagan, the king of the Khazars, and became related to him by marrying his daughter. | King Justinian marched out with the armies of the Khazars and proceeded to Constantinople. He banished his enemy from the kingdom and settled back on the throne after ten years in exile. He reigned for a further six years. He seized the rebel Apsimarus and also Leontius and executed them, and he killed all the patricians of the Romans. He sent fifty ships filled with gifts, horses and weapons to the Khagan, king of the Khazars, and all were drowned. When this reached the Khagan, he wrote him a letter, saying: 'You idiot, you should have just sent me someone you trusted so that I send to you (with him) your wife and your child, which was born to you by her. That would have been better than killing all these

538 For these two figures see *PMBZ*, 'Stephanos' 6980, 'Tervel' 7250.

539 There follows a detailed account of Justinian's vengeance against numerous senior figures.

540 See *PMBZ*, 'Theophylaktos' 8272.



men who have now drowned. Or did you perhaps think that I would not send her to you except by a battle or a fight or that I would be petty-minded towards you and deprive you of her? If you want her and your child, just send (someone) and we will hand her over.' When Justinian read the letter, he despatched a servant, who brought to him his wife and child. He called his son Tiberius and seated him with him on the royal throne. That was in the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of 'Abd al-Malik.

MSyr: **Justinian** escaped and came out from exile and fled to the **Khagan, the king of the Khazars**. He received him joyfully. He (the Khagan) gave him his **daughter** as wife. **Then he sought help from the Bulgars**. He obtained **troops**<sup>541</sup> and marched against **Constantinople**. **Apsimar**us fled. **Justinian returned to the rule after being in exile for ten years**. He had **Leontius and Apsimar**us killed. **Many of the great men he killed; others he banished. He caused the Roman state to be bereft of notables. Justinian found 6000 Arab prisoners. These he released to their country**. He sent a great army to fetch his wife, all of whom drowned in a storm at sea. When the Khagan heard of this, he sent word to him: 'You stupid unthinking fool! You should have just sent a few. Did you imagine that I would keep her from you? No, by the life of your stupidity, I will not keep her. Just send (someone) and take her.' When Justinian heard this he was ashamed. He sent for his wife and for his son, Tiberius, whom he had made his partner in the rule.

*Chron 1234*: **Justinian fled from** the place where he had been sent into **exile and went to the Khagan, the king of the Khazars**. He (Justinian) asked for the hand of his **daughter** in marriage and he received her. **Then he sought help from the Bulgars**. When he had mustered some **troops**, he set off for **Constantinople**. **Apsimar**us, when he heard of his coming, was afraid and **fled**, abandoning the city. Justinian arrived and entered the city without a fight. **Justinian returned to the rule after being deposed for ten years**. He had **Apsimar**us brought before him in chains and he ordered him to be killed; he also had **Leontius killed**, the man who had been king for three years. He took revenge on his enemies. **Many of the Romans he caused to perish without mercy. He murdered and impaled until he caused the Roman state to be bereft of notable men**. On his return **Justinian found 6000 Arab prisoners**. All of these he released and sent back to their

<sup>541</sup> This word is missing in Msyr, but is found in the corresponding passage in Bar Hebraeus, CS, 113.

**country** at the urging of Elustriya, son of Araq, from Harran,<sup>542</sup> who was also in Roman territory as a captive and him too Justinian released and sent back to his home with gifts.

### (705) The death of 'Abd al-Malik and accession of Walid I<sup>543</sup>

Theophanes: 'Abd al-Malik, the leader of the Arabs, died and his son Walid (Oualid) assumed power.<sup>544</sup>

Agapius: 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan died and his son Walid ruled after him for nine years and six months from the year AG 1018 (706–7).

MSyr: 'Abd al-Malik died there (in Mopsuestia) or, as others say, he was killed in this year (AG 1017/715). **His son Walid**, the ninth king (of the Arabs), then ruled as king of the Arabs. He reigned for nine years and five months. This Walid made Martat ibn Sharik governor of Qinnasrin and sent (Martat's brother) Qurra (as governor) to Egypt.

*Chron 1234*: 'Abd al-Malik died in the month of February, after a reign of twenty-two years, and **his son Walid** took the reins of power after him.

### Walid builds the mosque of Damascus and makes Arabic the official language<sup>545</sup>

Theophanes: Walid seized the most holy cathedral of Damascus. The wretched man did this out of envy of the Christians, because this church

<sup>542</sup> Mentioned in the Life of Theodotus of Amida (d. 698) as a governor (*arkhōn*) in the region of Samosata and as a native of Harran (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 158).

<sup>543</sup> Theophanes, 374; Agapius, 498; *Chron 1234*, 298 (AG 1017/705–6). Msyr 11.XVII, 451/478, links 'Abd al-Malik's death to the rebuilding of Mopsuestia (see the notice on 'Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-Malik in Asia Minor above). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1035–36 (Shawwal AH 86/October 705).

<sup>544</sup> Walid was the tenth caliph of the Muslims; he reigned 86–96/705–715; see *EI*, 'al-Walid I b. 'Abd al-Malik'.

<sup>545</sup> Theophanes, 376; Agapius, 498 (Walid, year 1/705–6); Msyr 11.XVII, 451/481; *Chron 1234*, 298–99. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1053–54, and Ibn Khayyat, 300 (AH 87/706: mosque of Damascus); Eutychius (Cheikh), 2.42; Elias of Nisibis, 156 (AH 88/AG 1018/707). Baladhuri, 193, attributes to 'Abd al-Malik the decision to change the language of the administration for the unlikely reason that a Greek scribe urinated in his inkpot. On the Damascus mosque see Lammens, *Omayyades*, 269–304; Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus*.



was surpassingly beautiful. He also forbade that the registers of the public offices should be written in Greek; instead, they were to be expressed in Arabic, except for the numerals, because it is impossible in their language to write a unit or a pair or a group of three or a half or a third.<sup>546</sup> For this reason they have Christian notaries until this day.

Agapius: Walid set about pulling down the churches of Damascus, especially the great church, which he demolished and built a congregational mosque in its place. He ordered that the registers not be written in Greek, but in Arabic, because all the Arabs in Syria and Assyria (*al-Shām wa-Sūriya*) used to do their writing in Greek.

MSyr: This Walid hated the Christians and **demolished churches**. First of all, he demolished the great church of Damascus and **built a mosque in its place**. He did the same in many places. | In 1022 (710–11) **Walid ordered** that the scribes not write the accounts of the treasury **in Greek**, but only in Arabic,<sup>547</sup> as **until this time all the registers** of the scribes had been written in Greek.

*Chron 1234*: On assuming power Walid immediately began to **demolish the churches** of Damascus. He pulled down the great and splendid sanctuary of St John (the Baptist) and **built in its place a mosque** for their prayers, which he surrounded with fine buildings and decorated with gilded mosaic pictures. | In this year (AG 1019/707–8) **Walid**, king of the Arabs, **ordered** that in his chancellery, that is, the treasury, what the Arabs term the *dīwān*,<sup>548</sup> there should be no writing in **Greek**, but only in Arabic script, for **until this time the registers** of the Arab kings were in Greek.

546 This is obscure, though the point may be that there was as yet no way of writing numerals in Arabic; Greek and Aramaic used individual letters to stand for numerals, but this was not done in Arabic and Indian numerals (what we call Arabic numerals) only began to be adopted in the early Abbasid period. There is also a story that when the Persian registers were being changed to Arabic, an objector to the process challenged the implementer as to how fractions could be written in Arabic (Sprengling, 'From Persian to Arabic', 195–96).

547 Here rendered rather unusually as *ṭayyā'ir*, from the common Syriac word for an Arab, *ṭayyāyā*; *Chron 1234* uses the expression *b-seprā arabāyā* 'in Arabian script'.

548 The terms used here are *dēmosion* ('treasury' or indeed any public/state institution/building) and *bēt kartīsē* (literally: 'house of records/documents'). *Dīwān* seems to have initially meant 'register', i.e. a document for recording stipends or taxes, and then by association came to mean the office where such documents were maintained and housed; see *El*, 'Dīwān'.

### (707–8) Maslama captures Tyana<sup>549</sup>

Theophanes: Maslama (Masalmas) and 'Abbas<sup>550</sup> (Abas) made an expedition against Tyana... The king sent against them two generals... with an army and a throng of peasant militia... They were routed; many thousands perished and many more were taken captive...

Agapius: Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik raided the Romans and entered the city of Tyana where he remained for nine months. A Roman patrician came out against him and fought him. The Romans were routed and lost 40,000 men. They destroyed the city of Tyana, took captive its inhabitants and burned them.

MSyr: He (Walid) sent an army<sup>551</sup> with the general **Maslama** to attack **Tyana**, a city of Cappadocia, which they besieged for nine months. Justinian sent a Roman **force**. When they joined **battle**, the Romans were defeated and **40,000** of the Romans fell. The city was taken by the Arabs in the year AG 1019 (707–8), in the month of March. They took prisoners, plundered and **carried off** from it much wealth.

*Chron 1234*: **Maslama** ibn 'Abd al-Malik, brother of Walid, went up to Roman territory and laid siege to the city of **Tyana**. He persevered with the assault for nine months. Then the general Theophylact was sent at the head of a large **force**; he engaged in **battle** with the Arabs, but the Romans were crushed and **40,000** of them were killed. So the Arabs subdued the city, **carried off** (its inhabitants) into captivity and returned to Syria.

549 Theophanes, 376–77 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §44); Agapius, 498–99 (Walid 2/706–7); MSyr 11.XVII, 451/478; *Chron 1234*, 298 (AG 1019/707–8). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1064–65, and Ibn Khayyat, 302 (AH 88/707). Tyana, modern Kemerhisar in south central Turkey, was an ancient town of Asia Minor (the Hittite 'Tuwanuwa') on the road from Cappadocian Caesarea to the Cilician Gates (and thence to Syria); it is mentioned in numerous Arabic sources as Ṭuwāna, which is probably what Agapius' text is meant to say, though it looks more like Ṭawīla in the manuscript. See *ODB*, 'Tyana'; Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 116–18.

550 'Abbas, son of Walid I, was a respected Muslim general who led numerous raids into Byzantine territory in the early eighth century, often together with his uncle, Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik. See *El*, 'al-'Abbas b. al-Walid I'.

551 This word is missing in Chabot's edition, but can be restored from the corresponding passage in Bar Hebraeus, CS, 114. Note that Tyana is written as Ṭāwnā in MSyr and *Chron 1234*, but Ṭwānā in Bar Hebraeus.



### Arab campaigns in Asia Minor<sup>552</sup>

Theophanes: 'Abbas made an expedition against the Roman country and, after taking many captives, returned home. | 'Uthman made an expedition against Cilicia and took many forts by capitulation. Kamak (Kamachon)<sup>553</sup> and the surrounding country were betrayed to the Arabs.

Agapius: 'Abbas ibn Walid raided and took many captives. 'Uthman ibn Hayyan raided Cilicia and captured many forts there by treaty and carried off their inhabitants to Syria.

MSyr: Maslama seized Tibranda, Gargarum, Tunada and many other forts in the Hexapolis,<sup>554</sup> on the Roman border. A guard post of the Arabs was established at Tunada.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

### (711–13) The rise and fall of Philippicus and accession of Anastasius II<sup>555</sup>

Theophanes: The men of Cherson and of the other forts (in the Black Sea region) cursed Justinian and acclaimed as emperor Philippicus Bardanes,

552 Theophanes, 377; Agapius, 499; MSyr 11.XVII, 451–52/479 (AG 1022/710–11; either this is misattributed to Maslama or Maslama raided as well or it is a different raid (see the next but one notice)). Theophanes adds that 'Abbas began to build 'Garis in the region of Heliopolis' (thus *Chron* 819, 14, AG 1016, though naming Walid I as the builder); this is 'Ayn al-Jarr, modern Anjar, on the Beirut–Damascus road, where the remains of an Umayyad royal residence are still to be found (Chehab, 'On the identification of 'Anjar'). The campaign of 'Abbas intended here is probably that of AH 90/709, when he reached as far as Arzan, near Mayperqat, in modern south-east Turkey (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1089; Ibn Khayyat, 306).

553 Modern Kemah, on the left bank of the Euphrates north-east of Melitene, in modern east central Turkey.

554 *Ksplys*: Chabot takes it as a corruption of Cilicia, but Hexapolis, in modern central Turkey (see n. 398 above), makes better sense and is closer to the Syriac. Bar Hebraeus, *CS*, 114, has *kspwlys*, which is even closer to Hexapolis. Note that Bar Hebraeus says that a guard post was established not at Tunada, but at Turanda, which is at least a known site (see n. 529 above), unlike Tunada. Tibranda and Gargarum are also unknown.

555 Theophanes, 377–81 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §45) | 382 | 383 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §48); Agapius, 499–500; MSyr 11.XVII, 452/479, 452/482 (Armenians); *Chron* 1234, 299. The notices are too different to be sure that they are all drawing upon TC, except for the part about Philippicus' expulsion of the Armenians (note that MSyr puts it in a separate column to the rest of the notice). See *ODB*, 'Philippikos, king (711–13)', 'Anastasios II, king (713–15)' (also called Artemius).

who was exiled there... Justinian fitted out another fleet and dispatched the patrician Maurus, called Bessos,<sup>556</sup> to whom he gave a battering ram and every other kind of siege engine, with instructions to destroy the walls of Cherson and the entire town and not to leave a single soul alive there... (Philippicus) Bardanes escaped and fled to the Khagan... As the fleet was delayed and no communiqué had come, Justinian... sailed as far as Sinope to reconnoitre the situation at Cherson. While he was gathering intelligence concerning the regions across the sea, he saw the fleet sailing in the direction of the City (Constantinople) and, with a roar like a lion's, he too rushed to the City. Since Philippicus had overtaken him and seized the City, he (Justinian) came to Damatrys<sup>557</sup> and encamped there with his men... Philippicus, for his part, immediately sent the patrician Maurus and the *spatharios*<sup>558</sup> John, surnamed Strouthus, against Tiberius (whom they killed) and he sent (the *spatharios*) Elias, also with an armed band, against Justinian at Damatrys (whom he killed)... When Philippicus had become emperor, he convened a bogus council of bishops... and cast down the holy Sixth Ecumenical Council. | He drove the Armenians out of his country and obliged them to settle in Melitene and the Fourth Armenia. | Rufus, *prōtostrator*<sup>559</sup> of (the province of) Opsikion,<sup>560</sup> rushed into the palace and found Philippicus asleep...; he blinded him without anyone being aware of this. The next day, that is, on Pentecost, the people gathered in the Great Church, and Artemius, the *prōtasēkrētis*,<sup>561</sup> was crowned king and renamed Anastasius.

Agapius: One of the Roman patricians called Philippicus revolted. He was on one of the islands of the sea and so Justinian dispatched one of his patricians to fight him. When he met up with him, he pledged allegiance to him and joined him. The news reached the king and he set off to the sea coast

556 See *PMBZ*, Mauros' 4914.

557 This probably corresponds, say Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 531, to modern Samandra, east of the mountain of St Auxentius (Kayaışdağ), a few kilometres south-east of Constantinople. Theophanes omits the note in the common source of him and Nicephorus (§45) that Tervel, the Bulgar ruler, had sent 3000 men to Damatrys in support of Justinian.

558 A member of the imperial bodyguard, though it gradually became more of an honorary title. On this John see *PMBZ*, 'Ioannes Struthos' 2958, and on the *spatharios* Elias mentioned in the next sentence *ibid.*, 'Elias' 1474.

559 Originally meaning imperial stable master, this term came to designate a senior military office in the middle Byzantine period (ca. eighth–tenth centuries), who would be present in the retinue of the emperor.

560 This is the province in the north-west of modern Turkey that lay across the sea from Constantinople.

561 The head of the order of the *asēkrētai*, the senior class of imperial notaries.



of Pontus. The rebel Philippicus and his men approached Constantinople and the Romans accepted him and made him king over them. He killed Tiberius, son of Justinian, and his patricians and dispatched the armies to pursue Justinian. They caught him, slaughtered him and carried his head to Philippicus. This took place in year 93 of the Arabs, 7 of Walid (711–12). | Philippicus, king of the Romans, ordered all the Armenians to be banished from his realm into Armenia. They went and migrated to the Arabs; Walid settled them in Melitene and Samosata. | The Romans attacked Philippicus, their king, and gouged out his eyes; they removed him from power and made Anastasius king over them. He ruled them for three years.

MSyr: **Philippicus rebelled and killed Justinian, king of the Romans, and his son Tiberius.** Then he (Philippicus) ruled over the Romans...<sup>562</sup> Philippicus took up the rule in the year AG 1023 (711–12). **This Philippicus was well-versed and well instructed in profane studies.** He wanted to abolish the Sixth Synod and efface the doctrine of Maximus...<sup>563</sup> | At this time Philippicus, king of the Romans, **expelled the Armenians who were in his realm; they left and sought refuge with the Arabs, who settled them in Melitene and its hinterland, and in Fourth Armenia.**<sup>564</sup> | **The Romans cast out Philippicus and gouged out his eyes** after he had reigned for two years and six months. Anastasius then reigned for two years and five months.

*Chron 1234:* In the year AG 1021 (709–10) the patrician **Philippicus rebelled** against the **king**, along with some other **Romans, and killed him and his son Tiberius.** They stuck his (Justinian's) head on a spear and paraded it through the city (of Constantinople). He had reigned for sixteen years in all, first for ten years, then for six. **This Philippicus was well educated, well-versed in learning, polished in speaking, and well instructed in all the profane studies.** He ordered that all **the Armenians who were in his realm be expelled; they left and sought refuge with the Arabs, who settled**

<sup>562</sup> Here is placed the notice about Walid ordering the killing of Christian captives given below.

<sup>563</sup> Here is placed the notice about Maslama capturing Tyana given above. On the famous Byzantine theologian, Maximus the Confessor (d. 662), see *PMBZ*, 'Maximos Homolegetes' 4921.

<sup>564</sup> Msyr places this notice in a different column to the preceding ones. He adds that the Armenians multiplied in these lands and became supporters of the Arabs and enemies of the Byzantines; this was therefore bad policy on the part of the Byzantines and only done because of their hatred of the Miaphysites.

**them in Melitene and its limits.** The following year **the Romans cast out Philippicus from power and gouged out his eyes.** After the deposition of Philippicus the Romans made Anastasius king over them.

#### (711–13) Arab campaigns in Asia Minor<sup>565</sup>

Theophanes: Maslama captured Amasea<sup>566</sup> and other fortified places and took many captives. | 'Abbas made an expedition against the Roman country and captured Pisidian Antioch,<sup>567</sup> where he took many prisoners and then returned home. | Maslama made a raid into Roman country and, after devastating Galatia, returned home with captives and much booty.

Agapius: Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik raided the Romans and captured the city of Amasea and many forts. | 'Abbas ibn Walid raided the Romans and captured (Pisidian) Antioch and enslaved its people. | Maslama raided the Romans and brought back many prisoners. | Maslama raided the Romans and reached Galatia; he captured many forts (there) and enslaved its people.

MSyr: **Maslama**, the general of the Arabs, **raided and captured** the city of **Amasea** and many other places. | 'Abbas ibn Walid also made a raid and took Antioch in Pisidia; he returned with numerous captives. | Maslama invaded the land of Galatia, captured forts in it and returned with many captives.

*Chron 1234:* **Maslama** invaded Roman territory **and captured Amasea** and plundered it and left with abundant booty and captives.

<sup>565</sup> Theophanes, 382–83; Agapius, 499–500; Msyr 11.XVII, 452/479 (AG 1022/710–11); *Chron 1234*, 299 (only Maslama's capture of Amasiya). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1120 (AH 92/711), 1133 (AH 93/712), 1147–48 (AH 94/713); *Chron 819*, 14 (which notes that Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik was made governor of Mesopotamia in AG 1021/709–10, and then led an expedition against Turanda, Amasiya and Mostiya, which he destroyed, taking its people into captivity). Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 119–21.

<sup>566</sup> An ancient fortified town in the mountains near the Black Sea coast in modern northern Turkey.

<sup>567</sup> A major Roman city, some 200 km north of modern Antalya in south-west Turkey, distinct from Syrian Antioch (modern Antakya).



**(713) An earthquake in northern Syria**<sup>568</sup>

Theophanes: There was a violent earthquake in Syria on the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month of February.

Agapius: There was a big earthquake and many places in Antioch fell down.

MSyr: **There was a very violent earthquake on the 28<sup>th</sup> in the month of February, which threw down many places in the regions of Antioch, Aleppo and Qinnasrin. It was the churches and the sanctuaries that suffered most.**

*Chron 1234*: **There was a violent earthquake in the month of February, which threw down many places in the regions of Antioch, Aleppo and Qinnasrin. It was the churches and the sanctuaries that suffered most.**

**(Further notices on Walid:**

An edict was issued by Walid, king of the Arabs, that all the magicians be put to death. They were tied onto wood and thrown into water. Those who floated were put to death; those who sank were saved. Many were killed.

An account of how Muhammad ibn Marwan, governor of Mesopotamia, pressured Mu'adh, a chief of the Christian Arab tribe of Taghlib, to become a Muslim and killed him when he refused. Likewise, King Walid tortured Sham'allaha, another Taghlibite chief, for refusing to apostatise.<sup>569</sup>

An edict was issued from Walid, king of the Arabs, concerning Christian captives and they were killed inside churches in all the cities of Syria.

This Walid was a cunning man and he increased exactions and tribulations more than all his predecessors.

In the year 89 of the Arabs (708) he (Walid) had his uncle Muhammad (ibn Marwan) dismissed from the governorship of Mesopotamia and appointed instead of him his brother Maslama. When the latter had arrived in Mesopotamia and taken control of all of it, he had the lands measured, the vineyards and crops counted, as well as animals and persons. And he hung lead seals on everyone's necks.<sup>570</sup>

<sup>568</sup> Theophanes, 383; Agapius, 500; MSyr 11.XVII, 451/481 (AG 1024/712–13); *Chron 1234*, 299–300. Cf. *Chron 819*, 15 (28 February AG 1024/713; followed by plague, epidemic and locusts).

<sup>569</sup> This is a summary of a quite long account. On the phenomenon of forced conversion of Arab Christians see my *Seeing Islam*, 352–54. The Syriac verb used here for converting to Islam is *haggār*; see n. 379 above.

<sup>570</sup> MSyr 11.XVII, 451/481 (killing of magicians); 11.XVII, 451–52/480–81 (two Taghlibite martyrs); 11.XVII, 452/479 (killing of Christian captives); *Chron 1234*, 299 (Walid's

**(715) The death of Walid I and accession of Sulayman**<sup>571</sup>

Theophanes: Walid died and Sulayman<sup>572</sup> (Souleiman) succeeded to the throne.

Agapius: Walid died and Sulayman ruled after him for two years and four months.

MSyr: **Walid, king of the Arabs, died and his brother Sulayman ruled for two years six months.**

*Chron 1234*: **Walid, king of the Arabs, died in the month of February and his brother Sulayman ruled after him over the Arabs in Damascus.**

**(715) Theodosius replaces Anastasius as emperor by revolt**<sup>573</sup>

Theophanes: (King Anastasius) chose the swiftest vessels of his own fleet (to intercept 'a Saracen fleet'), manned them with soldiers of the Opsikion province and ordered that they should all assemble at Rhodes... The men of Opsikion refused to do so: they cursed the king and killed the deacon John<sup>574</sup> (their commander) with their swords. The fleet consequently dispersed and each squadron sailed off to its own station, while the evil-doers moved against the imperial city. When they had come to Adramytion,<sup>575</sup> being leaderless, they found there a local man called Theodosius, who was a collector of public taxes, an idle and ordinary fellow, whom they urged to become king. He ran away and hid on a mountain, but they found him and acclaimed him king by force... (Anastasius) departed to the city of Nicaea where he made himself secure... (Anastasius) assumed the habit of a monk. Theodosius kept him unharmed and exiled him to Thessalonica.

exactions and the census of Maslama; word-for-word correspondence found in *Chron 819*, 14 and 15). See Robinson, 'Neck-sealing'.

<sup>571</sup> Theophanes, 384; Agapius, 500; MSyr 11.XVII, 452/479 (AG 1026/714–15); *Chron 1234*, 300 (AG 1026 and AH 96/715). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1176–77 (Jumada II AH 96/February 715).

<sup>572</sup> Sulayman was the eleventh caliph of the Muslims; he reigned 96–99/715–717. See *El*, 'Sulayman b. 'Abd al-Malik'; Eisener, *Zwischen Faktum und Fiktion: Sulaiman b. 'Abd almalik*.

<sup>573</sup> Theophanes, 385–86 (a long account from a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §§50–51); Agapius, 501; MSyr 11.XVII, 452/479; *Chron 1234*, 300. See *ODB*, 'Theodosios III, king (715–17)'.

<sup>574</sup> See *PMBZ*, 'Ioannes' 2961.

<sup>575</sup> Modern Edremit, on the coast of the Aegean Sea, in modern north-west Turkey.



Agapius: Anastasius, king of the Romans, dispatched troops against the enemies surrounding him, but the Romans<sup>576</sup> attacked their patrician<sup>577</sup> and killed him and made another man (i.e. Theodosius) king over them. The news reached Anastasius and he feared the aggression of the people of Constantinople. He left for Nicaea<sup>578</sup> and dispatched messengers to Maslama asking him to ask Sulayman to supply him with Arab troops. When the rebel (Theodosius) learned that King Anastasius was at Nicaea, he set off towards him. When he arrived, Anastasius deputed a patrician to block the way to the rebel, but he (Theodosius) entered Constantinople. Its people accepted him and made him king over them [...]. He (Anastasius) was brought to him (Theodosius), and the latter ordered him (Anastasius) to be exiled to an island in the sea after he had reigned for one year and seven months.

**MSyr: Anastasius sent an army to the western region. The army revolted against its leader and killed him. They brought forward Theodosius and made him king. Then Anastasius fled to Nicaea.** Theodosius reigned and Anastasius was sent away.

**Chron 1234: Anastasius sent an army to the western region** to fight with enemies. **The army revolted against its general. They brought forward a man named Theodosius and made him king** over them. When the king's troops revolted and they made Theodosius king, the news reached Anastasius and he was afraid. **Then Anastasius fled to Nicaea** in Bithynia. But Theodosius sent an army after him to arrest him; he himself went straight to Constantinople, where they received him with rapture and proclaimed him king. Meanwhile, those who had been sent to Nicaea seized Anastasius, shaved his head and sent him to Theodosius, who **sent him away** into exile. That happened after he (Anastasius) had reigned for one year and three months. Leo, the general of the Anatolikon,<sup>579</sup> did not consent to the rule of Theodosius and carried on the struggle on Anastasius' behalf.

<sup>576</sup> Agapius is probably here translating the Syriac word *rūmāyē*, which can just mean Romans, but can also mean soldiers, which would certainly make better sense here and would fit with what Theophanes and Dionysius say.

<sup>577</sup> I have always translated Arabic *baṭrīq* as patrician (on which see n. 10 above), since that is the word it derives from, but sometimes, as here, the sense requires something like 'general' or 'leader'.

<sup>578</sup> Modern Izmir, on the southern coast of the Sea of Marmara, in modern north-west Turkey.

<sup>579</sup> The name of a Byzantine province (*thema*) that corresponds to modern west central Turkey.

### (716–18) The Arab siege of Constantinople<sup>580</sup>

(during which Leo III replaced Theodosius and 'Umar II replaced Sulayman)

Theophanes: Maslama made an expedition against Constantinople. He sent in front of him Sulayman with a land army and 'Umar by sea,<sup>581</sup> while he himself followed them with much military equipment... Now Maslama, after he had wintered in Asia, was awaiting Leo's promises. But when he received nothing from Leo and realised that he had been tricked, he moved to Abydos,<sup>582</sup> crossed over to Thrace with a considerable army and advanced towards the imperial city... When 'Umar had become master of the Arabs, he ordered Maslama to turn back.

Agapius: Maslama launched an expedition against Constantinople. He appointed at the vanguard Sulayman ibn Mu'adh and Bakhtari ibn Hasan with many troops and they proceeded over land. He also dispatched 'Umar ibn Hubayra with many ships. Then he followed them and took captives in Nicaea. A patrician named Leo went to Sulayman ibn Mu'adh and promised to get him into Constantinople. Sulayman introduced him to Maslama, who promised him great things. Leo left him and went to Nicomedia. Theodosius, king of the Romans, dispatched troops against him, but Leo defeated them and killed the son of King Theodosius. Then the Romans conferred about making the rebel Leo king over them and they did so. He gathered troops, attacked Constantinople and seized the rule after Theodosius had reigned for one year and seven months. So Leo was now king over the Romans.<sup>583</sup>

<sup>580</sup> Theophanes, 386–90, 395–99 (again a long account principally from a Byzantine source – cf. Nicephorus, §§53–54, 56 – though probably also from TC, as is suggested by the similarity of the three excerpts cited here to Agapius and Dionysius); Agapius, 501–502 (Sulayman, year 2/716–17); MSyr 11.XVIII, 453–55/483–86; *Chron 1234*, 300–307. For Dionysius, I give the text of *Chron 1234* (tr. Palmer, 211–19), which is fuller than, but close to MSyr; Dionysius concludes his narrative with an account of the foundation of Byzantium/Constantinople. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 156–59 (AG 1028); *Chron 819*, 15 (AG 1027–28; a long account, which includes the notice that Sulayman 'brings back safe and sound the *Sūryāyē* (Syrians/Syriac-speakers/Miaphysites) brought there as captives'); Tabari, 2.1314–17 (AH 98/716–17), who also records the deal between Maslama and Leo and the latter's subsequent deception. See Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1193–94, 1208–10, 1223–24 (97–99 AH/716–18: siege of Constantinople), 1222 (Safar AH 99/Sept–Oct. 717: death of Sulayman); Brooks, 'The Campaign of 717–18'; Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 122–33.

<sup>581</sup> See PMBZ, 'Sulaiman ibn Mu'adh' 7160, 'al-Bakhtari ibn al-Hassān' 736 (note that Agapius has al-Hasan not al-Hassan), and 'Umar ibn Hubaira' 8549 (see also *El*, 'Ibn Hubayra').

<sup>582</sup> Abydos is an ancient city on the Asian shore of the Dardanelles (or Hellespont, the strait connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara) in modern north-west Turkey.

<sup>583</sup> See ODB, 'Leo III, king (717–41)'.



Maslama remained awaiting the promises of Leo all the days of the summer. When it reached him that Leo now ruled over the Romans and had deceived him, he made for Constantinople and besieged it for a whole year. On hearing of the death of Sulayman he desisted from raiding and remained where he was. After Sulayman died, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz reigned after him for one year, four months and six days. He wrote in the first year of his reign to Maslama ibn Muhammad<sup>584</sup> [...].<sup>585</sup>

MSyr: very similar to the account in *Chron* 1234.

*Chron* 1234: Sulayman, the king of the Arabs, told Maslama to get ready for an expedition into the Roman Empire in order to besiege Constantinople. He mustered an army of 200,000 and built 5000 ships, which he filled with troops and provisions. As leader of these troops he appointed 'Umar ibn Hubayra, who was to be under the command of Maslama. He collected furthermore 12,000 workmen, 6000 camels and 6000 mules to bear provisions for the animals and the workmen. The camels he loaded with much weaponry and catapults. For this force he prepared supplies to last for many years, since Sulayman had said: 'I shall not cease from the struggle with Constantinople until either I conquer it or I destroy the entire dominion of the Arabs (in trying).' On his invasion Maslama was joined by about 3000 unemployed and unoccupied people, who belong to the class of Arabs without possessions whom they call volunteers.<sup>586</sup> They were also joined by many Arab financiers, who had provided mounts for the troops on the basis of hire or sale in the hope of being recompensed from the booty to be got out of the imperial city. Maslama ordered Sulayman ibn Mu'adh and Bakhtari to proceed by land and 'Umar ibn Hubayra by sea. After an extended march to the city of Amorion,<sup>587</sup> Bakhtari and Sulayman encountered there Leo, the general who, as we have related, had held out against Theodosius. This man made a covenant with the Arabs, whom he led to believe that he would help them to capture Constantinople. Maslama, who was still on the road, travelling behind them, was informed about this in written dispatches. He

584 Tentatively reading *kataba fi awal sana min mulki-hi*. Presumably Maslama ibn Muhammad is a mistake for Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik.

585 About one and a half lines are illegible here. Comparison with Dionysius and Muslim sources would suggest that what 'Umar wrote to Maslama was a missive instructing him to call off the siege and return home.

586 Using the Arabic word *mutaṭawwi'a* 'volunteers', who were a feature of a number of early Islamic military campaigns; they did not receive a salary, but were entitled to a share of any booty. See *EL*, 'mutaṭawwi'a'.

587 A city in Phrygia, modern west central Turkey, some 180 km south-west of Ankara.

was delighted with Leo's promises and he promised him in return that he would not permit the Arab army to cause any damage in Leo's province.<sup>588</sup> So when the Arab army arrived, Maslama gave orders that no one should do any harm in that region, not even taking a loaf of bread. Leo, for his part, gave orders that a travelling market should be loaded up for the Arab army and the Romans bought and sold in good faith and without fear. But Leo's whole concern was to seize the Roman kingdom for himself. As soon as the Arabs had left Leo's territory, they began to do all sorts of mischief and to commit all kinds of outrage in Roman lands, burning down churches and houses, looting, shedding the blood of men and taking children captive. Many cities in the region of Asia fell to them that summer and they ruined them and took captives and looted, slaughtering the men and sending the children and women back as slaves to their own country.<sup>589</sup> That winter the Arabs spent in Asia. Maslama sent Sulayman ibn Mu'adh with 12,000 men to lay siege to the city of Chalcedon, to cut off supplies from that approach to Constantinople and to lay waste and pillage Roman territory in general.

When Theodosius received intelligence of the covenant which Leo had made with Maslama, he sent men to round up his relatives and to shut them up in Amorion and he gave orders to the governor of Amorion to guard them with vigilance. Leo, on hearing that his relatives had been imprisoned in Amorion, marched in haste with his army until he reached Sulayman ibn Mu'adh at Chalcedon, for Maslama and the main force of the Arabs were encamped in Asia at that time. He demanded an army from Sulayman to go and put fear into the inhabitants of Amorion so that they would give him back his relatives. Sulayman gave him an escort of 6000 cavalry. So Leo returned to Amorion and pitched camp there. When the citizens realised that they were under siege, they were afraid of Leo. He went up to the wall and spoke with the leaders and the foremost men of the city. When they understood that his intentions were totally opposed to the betrayal of the Romans and that his relationship with Maslama was a pretence, designed to save his country from destruction, and they saw that Theodosius was incapable of running the kingdom and that there was no one more suitable to be king than Leo, who was in a position to save the imperial city by this

588 MSyr says rather: 'Maslama promised Leo that once he had conquered the city (of Constantinople) he would make him king of the Romans.'

589 This perhaps corresponds to the 'capture of Pergamon, Sardis and other cities' mentioned in a separate notice by MSyr 11.XVIII, 452/483, and *Chron* 819, 15, both placing it in AG 1027/715–16. Cf. Theophanes, 390–91; *Chron Byz-Arab* 741, §38 (capture of Pergamon by Maslama); Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1194 (AH 97/715–16).



stratagem of his, they exchanged with him oaths of fidelity and returned his relatives to him. Then Leo dismissed his Arab escort after giving each man twelve gold coins. Having done this, he set off with his own army towards Constantinople. On the way he pitched camp in a certain ruined city on the sea coast. While they were encamped there, a force sent by King Theodosius caught up with them. Their orders were to do battle with Leo and, on his defeat, to crown Theodosius' son, who had been sent with them as general of their force. They had with them the crown and the purple of empire, with which to invest his son as king, once they had defeated Leo. But when they reached Leo's camp and the two armies met, the Romans on Leo's side and those who had been sent by the king agreed unanimously to make Leo king. They placed the crown which they had brought with them on his head and invested him with the purple and delivered Theodosius' son to him. Then they all marched to the imperial city where all the citizens welcomed them with a festive escort. Theodosius was deposed from the rule after a reign of one year and four months and Leo took control over the kingdom in AG 1028 (716–17).<sup>590</sup>

When Maslama heard that Leo had become king he was overjoyed, supposing that he would thereby find an opportunity to fulfil his promise and deliver the city to him. And Leo, from the moment of his elevation to the throne, wrote constantly to Maslama, encouraging him in his vain hopes. At the same time he was restoring and strengthening the city and gathering into it plenty of supplies. He was also having ships prepared for combat with the enemy. And he came to a financial arrangement with the Bulgars, by which they agreed to help the city. In short, he took every possible precaution to ensure the city's impregnability. Winter passed away and Maslama realised the deceit which Leo had practised on him. He made ready his army and his ships and in June of the same year he crossed over to the far side (into Europe). Leo, for his part, had received intelligence that Maslama was getting ready to cross over and he sent men to scorch the earth in the whole region to the west of the city. Maslama's army crossed to a point about six miles below the city, but Maslama himself with his escort of 4000 cavalry landed after the rest at a distance of about ten miles from the camp of those who had preceded him. That night the Bulgarian allies of the Romans fell upon him unexpectedly and slaughtered most of the force that was with him. Maslama escaped by a hair's breadth and reached the safety of the greater encampment. Then the whole army moved up to the west side of the city and pitched camp near the wall, opposite the so-called golden gate. They dug

590 Msyr adds: 'year 98 of the Arabs', which corresponds to 716–17.

a ditch in front of the camp, between it and the city, and another behind it, between it and the Bulgars. To the right and to the left of the camp was the sea, with a force of about 30,000 Arabs on board the ships. Maslama also instructed the Egyptian crews to stay at sea and to defend the ships from the ships of the Romans. A further force of 20,000 under the command of Sharahil ibn 'Ubayda<sup>591</sup> was sent out to guard the land approaches of the camp against the Bulgars and the seaward approaches against the Roman ships. On the opposite camp they had to combat the Roman scouts who tried to draw them off and to prevent supplies from reaching the Arabs.

One day the Bulgars gathered against Sharahil and his army, did battle with them and killed a large number of them, so that the Arabs came to fear the Bulgars more than the Romans. Then their supplies were cut off and all the animals they had with them perished for want of fodder. Nowhere in all Syria could any further news of them be obtained, for they were surrounded by water and the Roman scouts prevented anyone leaving or entering the camp by sea. The Arabs outside the city and the Romans inside were in this critical state when winter came upon them with a vengeance. The Arabs, for their part, were all in despair. They dreaded going back without their king's permission and in any case the sea was so rough as to prevent them from going anywhere. Moreover, they were afraid of the Bulgars to the west of them. Straited thus on every side with the spectre of their death before their eyes, they abandoned all hope. As for Maslama, he deceived the Arab army with the expectation that, today or tomorrow, the Romans would surrender the city. He also held out false hopes to them of donations and supplies arriving from Sulayman, king of the Arabs. But after many interrogations they ascertained that all this was a pack of lies. From that time onwards they would not believe him even when he told the truth. And in this dire situation, where both sides were in such extraordinary danger, especially the Arabs, who were suffering cruelly from starvation, the sun of salvation suddenly shone upon them. The Romans, too, though they considered the Arabs more imprisoned than themselves, were actually facing great danger.

The Romans had inflicted such deprivation on the Arabs that they had begun to eat dead animals and corpses and dung. In the Arab camp a modius of wheat had reached the price of ten gold coins and a head of livestock was being sold for two or three gold coins. Many of them used to walk down to the ships and tear off the pitch from them and chew on it all day long.<sup>592</sup> While they were thus sorely afflicted their king, Sulayman, the son of 'Abd

591 Or rather Sharahil ibn 'Abd ibn 'Abda; see Tabari, 2.1317.

592 Msyr adds: 'They found soft stones and ate them, and that actually did them good.'



al-Malik, died, and so did his son, Ayyub, to whom the Arabs had sworn allegiance with their right hand as his father's successor designate. His death had actually occurred in October, at the beginning of this winter, and he had been succeeded by 'Umar, the son of 'Abd al-'Aziz, the son of Marwan, a man with a reputation for piety, truthfulness and the avoidance of evil.<sup>593</sup> As soon as he became king, he put all his energies into rescuing the Arab people who were trapped in the Roman Empire. Seeing that news of them was unobtainable, he appointed a trustworthy man, gave him a sufficient escort and sent him into the Roman Empire. He ordered him not to return without accurate information about Maslama and his army. This man found his way into the Arab camp and learned all about the situation of the army. Then Maslama gave him a letter full of lies to take to 'Umar, saying: 'The army is in excellent condition and the city is about to fall.' When the man returned to 'Umar, he related to him the very opposite of the good news contained in Maslama's letter. Then, indeed, the king shed tears and grieved deeply for the ruin of the Arab army. He waited until winter had passed and then sent another envoy, bearing a harsh letter to Maslama, in which he forbade him to be the cause of ruin to the Arab army. He was to remove his army and leave.<sup>594</sup> To the army he wrote: 'If Maslama refuses to leave, abandon him and come!' When the envoy from King 'Umar arrived and gave the letter to Maslama, the latter used a trick to conceal the command from the army. But the army came to know what the king had ordered and proclaimed it publicly throughout the camp: 'King 'Umar has commanded you to leave and to return to your own country.' On receiving such good news, they were filled with utter joy, especially when they heard that they had 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz for their king.

Then, unwillingly, Maslama set off home, with the curse of both sides upon him. They embarked on their ships and set sail on the sea and the Romans did battle with them there and burned many of their ships. The

<sup>593</sup> The twelfth caliph of the Muslims (if one includes Mu'awiya II; see n. 459 above); this magical number plus the fact that he ruled during the year AH 100 and in the aftermath of the failed siege of Constantinople gave 'Umar a quasi-messianic status. He reigned 99–101/717–720; see *El*, 'Umar II b. 'Abd al-'Aziz'.

<sup>594</sup> Msyr has a somewhat different version: 'When the envoy learned that he (Maslama) had written the opposite of what was (the condition) in the camp, he sent him word to take his army and leave. But since it was still winter, they were quite unable to depart. When the rigours of winter had passed and Maslama had not told the Arabs about Sulayman's death, the Romans told them from the wall: "Your king is dead!" and great fear fell upon the Arabs. Then the envoy of the king ('Umar) arrived bearing the command for Maslama to withdraw and for the people, if he refused, to withdraw regardless.'

survivors were caught at sea by a storm and most of the ships went down. Some were wrecked and thrown up on the barbarian coast. Such was the terrible fate of the Arab expedition after two years in Roman territory. King 'Umar, however, sent reinforcements to encourage those who had come away by land, with more than 20,000 mules and some horses, for all the Arabs were unmounted when they left because all their livestock had perished of starvation. The king sent much gold also for distribution, ten gold coins for every man. He also sent instructions throughout his empire that everyone who had a brother or other relative in the army under Maslama's command should go out to escort him home, taking provisions for the journey. Many did go out to meet them and did all they could do to save them.<sup>595</sup>

#### A violent earthquake<sup>596</sup>

Theophanes: A violent earthquake occurred in Syria.

Agapius: There was a violent earthquake which ruined many places.

MSyr: There was a large earthquake.

*Chron* 1234: not recorded

#### (717–20) 'Umar's rule<sup>597</sup>

Theophanes: 'Umar banned the use of wine in cities and set about forcing the Christians to become converted.<sup>598</sup> Those that converted he made exempt from tax, while those that refused to do so he killed and so produced many

<sup>595</sup> This information, plus the observation above that news of the besieging army's plight did not reach Syria, makes it likely that there is a Syrian source behind this notice on the siege of Constantinople.

<sup>596</sup> Theophanes, 399; Agapius, 502; Msyr 11.XIX, 455/490 (AG 1029). Cf. *Chron* 819, 15 (24 December AG 1029/717); Elias of Nisibis, 1.161–62 (Jumada I AH 99/December 717). Theophanes links this with 'Umar's actions in the next notice.

<sup>597</sup> Theophanes, 399; Agapius, 502–503; Msyr 11.XIX, 455–56/488–89; *Chron* 1234, 307–308. *Chron Zuqnin*, 164, mentions the rulings that 'the testimony of a Syriac-speaking Christian (*sūryāyā*) against an Arab cannot be accepted' and 'the blood value of an Arab is 12,000 silver coins and that of a Syriac-speaking Christian 6,000', but attributes them to Yazid II. There is a lot of literature about the restrictions 'Umar II imposed on the non-Muslims; most recently see Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims*, ch. 3.

<sup>598</sup> *Magarizein*; a verb made from the noun *magarītēs*; see n. 307 above.



martyrs. He also decreed that a Christian's testimony against a Saracen should not be accepted. He composed a letter concerning religion addressed to King Leo in the belief that he would persuade him to convert.<sup>599</sup>

Agapius: 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz displayed asceticism and piety. He banished corrupt men from his realm. He forbade Muslims to consume intoxicating drinks made from grapes and dates.<sup>600</sup> He led in public a virtuous life. He wrote a letter to King Leo calling on him to convert to Islam and disputing with him on matters of religion. Leo replied countering 'Umar's arguments, made clear to him the falsity of his doctrine and demonstrated to him the truth of Christianity with proofs from the revealed books, rational analogies and extracts from the Qur'an.

MSyr: 'Umar, as soon as he took up the rule over the Arabs, began to mistreat the Christians and that for two reasons: firstly, because he wanted to honour and to affirm the laws of the Muslims;<sup>601</sup> secondly, because of Constantinople, which the Arabs were unable to capture and before which many of them died (with loss of much)<sup>602</sup> wealth. Rancour<sup>603</sup> filled his heart and **he was very opposed to Christians** in every way. He was declared a zealot for their laws and was considered to be God-fearing **and he was averse to evil**. He ordered oppression of the Christians in every way to make them become Muslims. He legislated that every Christian who became a Muslim<sup>604</sup> would not pay poll-tax and many converted.<sup>605</sup> **He also decreed that Christians should not testify against Muslims, act as governors, raise their voices for prayer, strike the sounding-board** (to call people to prayer), wear the

599 Correspondence on the subject of religion is attributed to 'Umar II and Leo III, but that may just be because, as prestigious rulers, both known for their strong religious stance, they were obvious persons to ascribe such material to. See my 'The Correspondence of Leo III and 'Umar II' and Kaplony, *Konstantinopel und Damaskus*, 207–41.

600 This is the literal meaning of *al-khamr wa-l-anbidha*, but Agapius perhaps just means alcoholic drinks in general.

601 *Mashlmānē*, a rendering of the Arabic word 'Muslims'; this is unusual, as Msyr generally writes either Arabs (*ṭayyāyē*) or émigrés (*mhaggrāyē*, from the Arabic *muhājirūn*; see nn. 307 and 379 above).

602 Some such phrase is needed to complete the sense.

603 Or jealousy, reading *qene'tā* with Chabot (the text actually has *qe'netā*, but one can probably assume metathesis), and not, as Bar Hebraeus, CS, 117, has, *sene'tā* 'hatred'. The title of the chapter uses both words: 'Concerning 'Umar, king of the Arabs, who increased hatred for the Christians by (his) rancour/jealousy.'

604 Here, and in the next sentence, *mhaggar*, and in the previous sentence the verb was *nhaggar*; see nn. 379 and 601 above.

605 *Ahnefw*; literally: 'became pagan'.

overcoat<sup>606</sup> or **ride on a saddle and (that) if an Arab killed a Christian he could not be executed for it, but just paid compensation of 5000 silver coins**. He forbade and terminated the exactions from dwellings, inheritances and portions of revenues from lands levied in favour of churches, monasteries and poor people. He also forbade Arabs to drink wine or must. He died in the year 1034 (722–23), in the month of February.<sup>607</sup>

*Chron 1234*: This man, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, began to reign in the year 99 of the Arabs. He was a good and compassionate man, truth-loving and just, and **he was averse to evil**. However, **he was very opposed to Christians**, more than the kings before him. **He decreed that Christians should not raise their voices** in churches at the times **for prayer** and he banned **the sounding-board**. He also decreed that a Christian should not **ride a horse on a saddle and that if an Arab killed a Christian he could not be executed for it, but just paid compensation of 5000 silver coins**. After he had reigned for two years and five months he died.

Cf. *Chron 819*, 15–16: 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Marwan became king for two years and seven months; he was a good man<sup>608</sup> and a more compassionate king than all the kings before him. | In the year 1031 (719–20) 'Umar died in the region of Apamaea in the monastery of Ancyronta.<sup>609</sup>

*Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §40: In military matters 'Umar achieved no great success nor anything adverse, but he was of such great kindness and compassion that to this day as much honour and praise is bestowed on him by all, even foreigners, as ever has been offered to anyone in his lifetime holding the reins of power.

606 Written in Chabot's edition as *qby*, but presumably *qbāytā* is meant; cf. Arabic: *qabā*. It was usually a quite fine flowing garment with long sleeves. Bar Hebraeus, CS, 117, has 'clothes of soldiers' (*pālḥē*); this may be a misreading, unless this type of overcoat was originally only/mainly worn by soldiers (there are a number of instances in Muslim sources where military men are described as tucking their *qabā* into their belt before going into action; e.g. Tabari, 3.130).

607 The accounts of Msyr and *Chron 1234* are surprisingly divergent. Dionysius is not normally overtly critical of the Arabs, and so it seems likely that Msyr's more hostile comments were added later, and perhaps are Msyr's own words.

608 There is a small lacuna here in *Chron 819*, 15, and these two words are filled in from *Chron 846*, 234, which has an entry on 'Umar II very similar to that of *Chron 819*. For the positive image of 'Umar II in Christian sources (though Msyr is something of an exception) see Borrut, 'L'image de 'Umar II' and now his *Entre Mémoire et Pouvoir*.

609 Al-Naqira in Arabic (Yaqut, s.v. 'Dayr al-Naqira'; Ibn al-'Adim, 1.417); Nikertai in Greek.



{**The governors of Qinnasrin:** MSyr: In the region of Qinnasrin the governors were: after Martat, Farwa; after Farwa, Nadhr; after Nadhr, Muhammad; after Muhammad, Layth.}<sup>610</sup>

{**Anastasius attempts a comeback:** Agapius: One of the patricians of the Romans wrote a letter to Anastasius, the banished king, attacking King Leo, saying that he was not suited to rule and that Anastasius was more suited to it. He stated that the letter was done with the agreement of the people of the Empire who had crowned him and banished his enemy and that he should act accordingly and find a way to come (to Constantinople). When Anastasius read the letter, he was duped. Then the patrician wrote to him, as though from the (other) patricians, asking him to come. So Anastasius escaped, by night, and went to the lord of the Nubians,<sup>611</sup> seeking his protection and asking for help. The Nubian provided him with many troops and he went off to Constantinople, but the Romans did not accept him. When the blacks saw that the Romans did not accept him, they handed him over to them and to their king Leo, who put him in irons and had him remain locked up indefinitely. Then he sent the Nubians off to their lord and killed Anastasius and the patrician (who was responsible).}<sup>612</sup>

**(720) Yazid II comes to power and subdues Yazid ibn al-Muhallab**<sup>613</sup>

Theophanes: 'Umar, who had been emir of the Arabs for two years and four months, died and Yazid (Izid) became emir.<sup>614</sup> There arose up against him a usurper in Persia called, like him, Yazid ibn al-Muhallab (Izid Moualabi), and many Persians joined his cause. Yazid sent Maslama, who killed him

<sup>610</sup> MSyr 11.XIX, 456–57/489. These governors are not otherwise known. On Qinnasrin in northern Syria see n. 273 above.

<sup>611</sup> Vasiliev says this is a mistake for Bulgars, citing Tabari, 2.1317; in this case one would have to suppose that the reference to 'the blacks' in the next but one sentence is Agapius' own formulation.

<sup>612</sup> Agapius, 503. Theophanes, 400–401, also recounts the story (though involving the Bulgars, not the Nubians), but from a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §57), and so, in the absence of any corroboration from Dionysius, we cannot say whether this notice was in TC.

<sup>613</sup> Theophanes, 401; Agapius, 504; MSyr 11.XIX, 456 | 457/489; *Chron 1234*, 308. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1261 ('Umar's death/Yazid's succession: Rajab AH 101/February 720), 1281 (Ibn Muhallab's death: Safar AH 102/August 720); Elias of Nisibis, 162–63: AH 102/AG 1031/720.

<sup>614</sup> He was the thirteenth caliph of the Muslims; he reigned 101–5/720–724. See *EI*, 'Yazid II b. 'Abd al-Malik'.

and subjugated Persia.<sup>615</sup>

Agapius: 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz died in the seventh month of his third year and Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik came to power in AG 1025 (713–14).<sup>616</sup> In the first year of his reign a man named Yazid ibn al-Muhallab revolted in Iraq. The Arabs of the east joined with him. Then Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik marched towards him, defeated him and killed him and his men.

MSyr: In the year AG 1034 (722–23) in the month of February **'Umar died; Yazid reigned** after him for four years. **There was a revolt against Yazid** by a man of the Arabs from Hira, likewise **named Yazid, son of Muhallab**. There followed him all the **Arabs** of Hira, 'Aqula, Basra and all the lands of Persia. **Yazid, son of 'Abd al-Malik, sent against him a large army** from the West, Mesopotamia and Mosul. They waged battle with him near Babylon; Ibn Muhallab was defeated and **he was killed** and those who had joined him dispersed.

*Chron 1234*: When he had reigned for two years and five months **'Umar died**. In the year 101 (719–20) of the Arabs, **Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik, who was the son of the uncle of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, reigned**. As soon as he assumed the rule **there was a revolt against him** by a person from the easterners, **named Yazid, son of Muhallab**. There were with him many **Arabs** and easterners. King **Yazid sent against him** his brother Maslama with a **huge army**. It went to the east and they engaged the rebel there and **he was killed**; many of the forces with him were destroyed; Maslama subjected the east and returned victorious.

Cf. *Chron Byz-Arab 741*, §41: Yazid, succeeding in the rule of the Saracens, reigned for three years. The armies of his people, who were to maintain the defence among the Persians, plotted a revolt and prepared a civil war against him. A Saracen named Yazid, who did not originate from that royal tribe, (was) the font of this wickedness and provided counsels among them and remained over them. Informed about the rebellion, Yazid the king dispatched an expedition against them with his brother (whom we) mentioned some

<sup>615</sup> Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik defeated Yazid ibn al-Muhallab in a battle north-west of Basra; Yazid's family, the Muhallabids, were a very powerful and influential group and it seems to have been principally for their interests that Yazid was fighting, though he also attracted the support of many who opposed Umayyad rule; see *EI*, 'Muhallabids I'; Crone, *Slaves*, 133–35.

<sup>616</sup> Both Agapius and Dionysius give an incorrect Seleucid date; 'Umar would have died in AG 1031/719–20. Vasiliev has Agapius say that 'Umar died in his second year, but the manuscript clearly states 'his third year'.



time before, Maslama by name, born of a different mother. When both armies clashed in the Babylonian plain above the Tigris River, the aforementioned Yazid, leader of the rebellion, was killed by the army of Yazid the king. Thus his army was crushed as they slipped into flight so that, with hardly any escaping, they congratulated themselves that they had retained the breath in their bodies, their life spared by Maslama, the commander of the army.

#### A Syrian messiah<sup>617</sup>

Theophanes: There appeared a certain Syrian, who was a false messiah and deceived the Jews by calling himself Christ, the son of God.

Agapius: A man arose from the people of Mardin who told the Jews that he was the messiah. He was Christian, but then became a Jew and claimed that he had come to deliver them. Thus he collected much money. He had learned much conjuring and some sorcery, so he began to show them magic tricks and to captivate them. News of him reached Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik who ordered him to be killed.

MSyr: At this time there was a Syrian man, whose name was Severus, from the district of Mardin. He deluded the Jews, saying to (some of) them: 'I am the messiah' and to others: 'I am the messenger of the messiah.' He collected much gold. The governor arrested him and he confessed his fraud.

*Chron 1234*: At this time there was a Syrian man from Edessa, whose name was Severus; he was a crafty and cunning man who lived in a village named Gasika from the district of Mardin. In the hope of collecting money he went to the Jews and he deceived them, saying to some of them: 'I am the messiah' and to some of them: 'I am the messenger of the messiah.' He collected much gold. Afterwards this became known to Maslama and he arrested him and took all that he had collected. He confessed his fraud and so he (Maslama) let him go.

<sup>617</sup> Theophanes, 401; Agapius, 504 (Yazid II, year 1/720–21); MSyr 11.XIX, 456/490 (ca. AG 1031/719–20); *Chron 1234*, 308. Cf. *Chron Hispanic 754*, §60; *Chron Zuqnin*, 172–74, has a long account which has many elements in common with that of Dionysius except that he places the incident in the time of the caliph Hisham.

#### Leo seeks to convert non-Christians in his empire<sup>618</sup>

Theophanes: The king forced the Jews and the Montanists<sup>619</sup> to accept baptism. The Jews for their part were baptised against their will and then washed off their baptism. They partook of Holy Communion on a full stomach and so defiled the faith. As for the Montanists, they made divination among themselves and, after determining a certain day, entered the houses appointed for their false worship and burned themselves.

Agapius: Leo, king of the Romans, began to convert the peoples in his realm of a different religion to him and opposed to Christianity. He made Christian all the Jews and Harranians<sup>620</sup> and they called them new Christians.

MSyr: Leo, king of the Romans, initiated a persecution against those who were strangers to his belief and lived in his realm. Many fled to the country of the Arabians, who are the Arabs.<sup>621</sup> Some Jews received baptism and became Christians; they were called neapolitans, that is, new citizens.

*Chron 1234*: Leo, king of the Romans, initiated a persecution against the Jews and compelled them to become Christians.

#### Yazid orders the destruction of images<sup>622</sup>

Theophanes: A Jewish physician, who was a native of Laodicea in Maritime

<sup>618</sup> Theophanes, 401; Agapius, 504 (Yazid I); MSyr 11.XIX, 457/489–90; *Chron 1234*, 308.

<sup>619</sup> Followers of a certain Montanus, who preached in Phrygia in the second century AD; see *ODB*, 'Montanism'.

<sup>620</sup> The reading of this word is uncertain; the first two letters are clear, Ḥ and r, and thus my proposal of Harranians (i.e. people of Harran), but the rest of the word allows for a number of possibilities, since it is written without dots. The city of Harran was at this time in Muslim territory, but there may have been adepts of the pagan cult originating in Harran (see n. 862 below) in cities in Byzantine territory, or Harranians might have come to be a generic term for all manner of perceived pagan activity. On an annual pagan/Manichaean festival allegedly still held at Harran in the mid-eighth century see *Chron Zuqnin*, 224–26.

<sup>621</sup> *Arabāyē*, *ṭayyāyē*: see n. 158 above.

<sup>622</sup> Theophanes, 401–2; MSyr 11.XIX, 457/489; *Chron 1234*, 308. The accounts of Theophanes and Dionysius are quite different, so one cannot be sure if the story featured in TC. Theophanes goes on to narrate how an ex-Christian from Syria, named Beser, imparted iconoclastic ideas to Leo. *Chron Zuqnin*, 163, mentions this decree of Yazid and several others ('that white dogs, white pigeons and white cocks be killed' and 'that all blue-eyed people be killed'). See Vasiliev, 'Iconoclastic Edict', and Crone, 'Islam, Judeo-Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm', who discusses the link with Leo III's promotion of iconoclasm.



Phoenicia, came to Yazid and promised him that he would reign forty years over the Arabs if he destroyed the holy icons that were venerated in Christian churches throughout his dominions. The senseless Yazid was persuaded by him and decreed a general constitution against the holy images. But by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the intercessions of His chaste mother and of all the saints, Yazid died that same year before his satanic constitution had come to the notice of most people.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: Yazid, **king** of the Arabs, **ordered** the removal and **effacement of images and statues** of anything that lived or moved from **places of worship**, buildings, **walls, wood** and **stones**; even those found in **books** were effaced.

*Chron 1234*: Maslama commanded, by **order** of his brother the **king**, that all the **images be effaced**, whether in **places of worship**, on **walls**, in houses and even in **books**. Wherever there was found a carving or **statue** they destroyed it, whether on **stone, wood** or ivory.

Cf. *Chron 819*, 16: Yazid ordered that all the images in his empire, whether of bronze, wood or stone, or of paint, be completely destroyed.

#### 'Abbas ibn Walid campaigns in Asia Minor'<sup>623</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: 'Abbas ibn Walid raided the Romans and entered Paphlagonia, conquered it and took captive 20,000 persons from its people. He captured a fort called *wsfwn*.<sup>624</sup>

MSyr: The Arabs captured a strong fortress in the land of Cilicia called Shiza.

*Chron 1234*: 'Abbas ibn Walid was sent to Roman territory; he took a large number of captives and left. As he left, he ravaged Cilicia and captured the strong fort of Shiza.

<sup>623</sup> Agapius, 505; MSyr 11.XIX, 457/489; *Chron 1234*, 308–9. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1296–97 (AH 103/721–22).

<sup>624</sup> Thus writes Vasiliev, saying that the name is unclear in the manuscript. For the year AH 103 Tabari, 2.1437, has 'Abbas capture a place called *rsla*, whereas Ibn Khayyat, 335 (AH 102/720–21), says *dbas*, neither of which seem obviously to be identified with Agapius' *wsfwn* (Azdi, *TM*, 17, has *Awāsā*, which is closer) or with Dionysius' Shiza; but 'Abbas led numerous campaigns into Byzantine territory and we know very little about their itineraries. See also Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 145.

#### (724) The death of Yazid and the reign of Hisham<sup>625</sup>

Theophanes: Yazid, who had been emir of the Arabs for four years, died. His brother Hisham<sup>626</sup> (Isam) became emir and started to build palaces in the country and in towns, to lay out plantations and gardens, and to channel water.

Agapius: Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik died after reigning for four years. His brother Hisham ruled after him for nine(teen) years from the year 105 of the Arabs (723–24). He drew large revenues in most of the cities in his realm, from the shops, hostels, enclosed gardens,<sup>627</sup> estates and farms. He was the first of the Arabs to take on estates for himself. He opened up many abundant water channels and it was he who drew water from the river above Callinicum (Raqqā).<sup>628</sup> He established many plantations<sup>629</sup> in Mesopotamia and the Syrias. His own revenue amounted to more than all the land tax of his kingdom.

MSyr: **King Yazid died after reigning for four and a half years. After him Hisham reigned** over the Arabs for nineteen years; he was the thirteenth king of the Arabians.<sup>630</sup> **As soon as he began to reign**, he set about **oppressing mankind by high exactions and tribute. He led out waterways from the Euphrates above Callinicum** to irrigate the crops and **plantations. The revenue from them amounted to more than all the taxes that he drew from his kingdom.**

<sup>625</sup> Theophanes, 403; Agapius, 505; MSyr 11.XIX, 457/490 (AG 1037/725–26); *Chron 1234*, 309. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1321–22 (Sha'ban AH 105/January 724: death of Yazid II); *Chron Zuqnin*, 171 ('Hisham dug the Zaytun canal on which he built towns and forts as well as many villages, and adorned it with plants of all kinds'; thus also the Balis and the Hani canal). On Hisham's reign see Blankinship, *Jihad State*, and on his canal digging Katbi, *Land Tax*, 81–82.

<sup>626</sup> The fourteenth caliph of the Muslims; he reigned 105–25/724–43. See *El*, 'Hisham'.

<sup>627</sup> *Hjr*: Vasiliev rather oddly translates this as 'little houses'. The meaning of the root is to enclose or shut off (from other things, so also prevent, prohibit etc.), and Agapius is possibly attempting here to render the Syriac word *parādīsē* (used here by *Chron 1234*), which derives, via Greek, from the Persian term for an enclosed/walled garden. The usual word for this would be *mahjar*, but *hajra* (plural/collective noun: *hajr*) is also an option.

<sup>628</sup> A Hellenistic settlement (Greek: Kallinikos) from the third century BC (also known as Nicephorium); in Syriac this is rendered as Qālwnyqws. The Abbasid caliph built a garrison city right next to the old Greek city and called it the companion, 'al-Rafīqa'; subsequently the whole complex was called Raqqā, which is the name Agapius uses.

<sup>629</sup> *Gharasa gharšan*; this is semantically and grammatically a close translation of the Syriac phrase used in both MSyr and *Chron 1234*: *nšab nešbātā*.

<sup>630</sup> True if one disregards Mu'awiya II; see nn. 459 and 593 above. Note that MSyr consistently writes Hashīm whereas *Chron 1234* consistently writes Hāshim.



*Chron 1234*: **King Yazid died after reigning for four years. After him his brother Hisham reigned.** | Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik, as soon as he began to reign, was oppressing mankind by exactions of tribute higher than all the kings before him. He ordered that there be built for him in all the lands villas, shops, hostels and gardens. He ordered waters and canals to be led out into the desert by free and forced labour and he established there many plantations. **He led out waters from the Euphrates above Callinicum** and established plantations and enclosed gardens and spent much money on creating these things. **The revenue amounted to more or less the same as all the taxes that he drew from the whole of his kingdom.**

Cf. *Chron 819*, 16: Hisham, son of 'Abd al-Malik, became king after him (Yazid) for nineteen years. This man built more in his realm than the kings before him – houses and agricultural works and shops – and he diverted a river from the Euphrates to irrigate the plantations and the fields which he made near it.

#### Kathir ibn Rabi'a campaigns in Asia Minor<sup>631</sup>

Theophanes: He campaigned in Roman territory and, after losing many of his men, returned home.

Agapius: Kathir ibn Rabi'a raided the Romans, but they defeated him and killed his men; Kathir escaped with only a small group.

Dionysius: not recorded

#### Leo orders the destruction of images<sup>632</sup>

Theophanes: The impious king Leo started making pronouncements about removing the holy and venerable icons. When Gregory (II), the pope of

<sup>631</sup> Theophanes, 403; Agapius, 505 (Hisham, year 1/724–25). The subject of the sentence in Theophanes is the caliph Hisham, but may mean that he dispatched an army to campaign in Roman territory, of which one of the generals may have been this Kathir, though it seems that this Kathir ibn Rabi'a is only mentioned by Agapius.

<sup>632</sup> Theophanes, 404; Agapius, 506; Msyr 11.XIX, 456–57/491 (ca. 1036/724–25). Theophanes is also using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §60, who makes Leo's decision a consequence of a volcanic eruption in the Aegean in the summer of indiction 9/726). See Vasiliev, 'Iconoclastic Edict'; Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm... Leo III*; Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 307–43; ODB, 'Iconoclasm'.

Rome, had been informed of this, he withheld the taxes of Italy and of Rome and wrote to Leo a doctrinal letter to the effect that a king ought not to make pronouncements concerning the faith nor to alter the ancient doctrines of the church which had been defined by the holy fathers.

Agapius: Leo ordered the images of the martyrs to be effaced from churches, residences and monasteries. When Gregory, patriarch of Rome, learned of that, he was angry and forbade the inhabitants of Rome and Italy to pay Leo taxes.

MSyr: Leo, the king of the Romans, also ordered, like the king of the Arabs, to efface images from walls and to take down the statues in churches and houses, those of saints as well as those of kings and others. For this reason there was a rebellion in the kingdom of the Romans and many Romans were protesting against the king.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (726) Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik campaigns in Asia Minor<sup>633</sup>

Theophanes: Maslama made a campaign against Caesarea in Cappadocia and captured it.

Agapius: Maslama raided the Romans and captured the city of Neo-Caesarea and took its people captive.

MSyr: The Arabs besieged Neo-Caesarea in Pontus, captured it and destroyed it completely.

*Chron 1234*: In the year AG 1037 (725–26) Maslama invaded Roman territory and **besieged Neo-Caesarea in Pontus**. He fought against it, **captured it and destroyed it**. He led away the nobles who were found in it into captivity; only the armed men, not the populace.

<sup>633</sup> Theophanes, 404; Agapius, 506 (Hisham 3/726–27); Msyr 11.XIX, 457/490 (AG 1037/725–26); *Chron 1234*, 309. *Chron 819*, 17 (AG 1037/725–26), and *Chron Zuqnin*, 171, also speak of Neo-Caesarea in Pontus, but Elias of Nisibis, 164, says and Tabari, 2.1491, implies ('next to Mesopotamia') that it was Cappadocian Caesarea. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1361 (summer AH 108/726–27); Ibn Khayyat, 350, and Elias of Nisibis, 164, agree on AH 107/725–26. Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 146.



A plague in Syria<sup>634</sup>

Theophanes: There was a plague in Syria.

Agapius: There was a severe plague in Syria; various pustules and ulcers afflicted people.

MSyr: There was a deadly outbreak of plague in many lands, especially Mesopotamia.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

Mu'awiya ibn Hisham's campaigns in Asia Minor<sup>635</sup>

Theophanes: Mu'awiya (Mauias), Hisham's son, made a campaign in Roman country and returned after marching up and down. | A multitude of Saracens led by two emirs was drawn up against Nicaea<sup>636</sup> in Bithynia; Amer,<sup>637</sup> with 15,000 scouts, led the vanguard and surrounded the town, which he found unprepared, while Mu'awiya followed with another 85,000 men. After a long siege and a partial destruction of the walls, they did not overpower the town. | Mu'awiya captured the fort Ateous<sup>638</sup> and returned

634 Theophanes, 404; Agapius, 506; MSyr 11.XIX, 456/491 (AG 1036). Cf. *Chron 819*, 16 (AG 1036/724–25); Ibn Khayyat, 350 ('In that year there was a severe plague in Syria, even afflicting horses and cattle', AH 107/725–26; note that this entry would be perfectly at home in a Christian chronicle). Theophanes also notes that 'the emir's camels were burned at St Elijah's' without any explanation.

635 Theophanes, 404, 405–6 (drawing on a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §61), 407–10 (x 3); Agapius, 506–8 (x 6); MSyr 11.XXI, 462–63/501 (x 2); *Chron 1234*, 309–10 (x 5). Mu'awiya ibn Hisham led raids into Byzantine territory almost every year from AH 106–119/724–737 (see *EI*, 'Mu'awiya b. Hisham'), which makes it very difficult to align these different entries and even more difficult to match them with notices in external sources unless some specific place was attacked. See Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 146–50.

636 Modern Iznik, in north-west Turkey. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1374 (AH 109/727–28); Ibn Khayyat, 351 (AH 108/726–27; he raided Aruliya, probably Dorylaion, which is near Nicaea); Nicephorus, §61 (places it in the summer after the eruption of 726).

637 Nicephorus also mentions a certain Amer with Mu'awiya; Muslim sources speak principally of 'Abdallah al-Battal. Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 561, suggest linking him with the Gamer mentioned at Theophanes, 411, whom they identify with Ghamr, son of the caliph Yazid II; Crone, *Slaves*, 164–65, identifies him with 'Amir ibn Dubara, though gives no justification (it does not seem very likely since he is not otherwise attested until the 740s).

638 A fort in Phrygia or Galatia, modern north central Turkey (for references see Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 563), which probably equates to the Ghaṭāsīn of Ibn Khayyat, 352 (AH 109/727–28), which should perhaps be read as 'Aṭāsīn (leaving the dot off the first letter).

home. | Maslama<sup>639</sup> invaded Roman territory; he came to Cappadocia and captured the fort Charsianon by deceit. | Mu'awiya, son of Hisham, invaded Roman territory; he came as far as Paphlagonia<sup>640</sup> and withdrew with many captives. | Mu'awiya devastated Asia. | Mu'awiya invaded Roman territory; a few days after his return he fell from his horse and died.<sup>641</sup>

Agapius: Mu'awiya ibn Hisham raided the Romans, but had no success. | Mu'awiya ibn Hisham raided the Romans, captured many forts and took numerous captives. | Mu'awiya ibn Hisham raided the Romans, captured many forts and took their inhabitants captive. | Mu'awiya raided the Romans, entered Paphlagonia, captured the city of Gangra,<sup>642</sup> took its people captive and burned it. | Mu'awiya raided the Romans and captured a number of forts. | Mu'awiya raided Asia and took many captives in it; he returned again and took captives, then left, fell off his horse and died.

MSyr: The Arabs went up and invaded Roman territory with Mu'awiya, son of the king. They headed for the city of Gangra,<sup>643</sup> whose inhabitants fled before the Arab troops. The latter **demolished** the walls and destroyed the city completely. Then they went to lay siege to **the city of Nicaea. They assaulted it for forty days** and demolished its wall. The Romans fled **on boats** and the Arabs captured it (the city) and destroyed it. | Mu'awiya ibn Hisham invaded Roman territory again; he captured a stronghold in Cappadocia called Charsianon.

*Chron 1234*: Mu'awiya, son of King Hisham, set off for Roman territory, took abundant prisoners and returned in great triumph. | In AG 1040 (728–29) Mu'awiya ibn Hisham again invaded Roman territory and **demolished**

639 MSyr has Mu'awiya, not Maslama, take Charsianon and this is confirmed by Muslim sources, who refer to it as Kharshana (Ibn Khayyat, 357; Tabari, 2.1530; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1417: autumn AH 112/730–31), so it would seem that Theophanes is mistaken here in writing Maslama. Charsianon is situated between Cappadocian Caesarea and the Halys river in modern east central Turkey.

640 See Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1439 (AH 114/732–33); Ibn Khayyat, 360 (AH 114), 361 (AH 115: Aflājūniya).

641 For Mu'awiya's last campaign see Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1502 (AH 119/737); the date is confirmed by Elias of Nisibis, 167 (AH 119/AG 1048/737), though Ibn Khayyat, 369, has AH 122/740.

642 Rendered in the manuscript as *gh-n-j-r-ā*; misread by Vasiliev as *hwā* (which is not very different; it is just that he failed to notice the tooth after the /gh, which gives the 'n', and 'w' and 'r' are quite similar in any case).

643 Gangra was the metropolitan see of the province of Paphlagonia; it corresponds to modern Çankiri, in north central Turkey, about 120 km north-east of Ancyra (modern Ankara).



**Gangra** and besieged **the city of Nicaea**. After they had assaulted it for **forty days**, a Roman army came to it and entered the city **on boats** and then left it. | Another year Mu'awiya invaded Roman territory, pillaged, took captives and returned. | The next year Mu'awiya again invaded Roman territory, plundered the land of Asia and returned. | Mu'awiya invaded, took many prisoners and then on his return he fell from his horse and died.

{**A revolt in Egypt**: MSyr: In the year 1038 (726–27) there was in Egypt a revolt against the Arabs when a number (of Egyptians) resisted the authorities. Many of the people of the Arabs joined against them and killed many of the Egyptians. Those who escaped the killing seized ships and fled by sea.}<sup>644</sup>

#### The Arabs and Khazars clash<sup>645</sup>

Theophanes: The son of the Khagan, that is, the ruler of Khazaria,<sup>646</sup> invaded Media and Armenia. In Armenia he encountered the Arab general Jarrah<sup>647</sup> (Garachos), whom he slew together with his army. After devastating the lands of the Armenians and the Medes and causing great fear to the Arabs, he returned home. | Maslama invaded the land of the Turks. He joined battle with them and there were many casualties on both sides. Seized by cowardice, Maslama took to flight and returned through the mountains of Khazaria. | Maslama invaded the land of the Turks; he reached the Caspian Gates and withdrew in fear.

Agapius: The son of the Khagan, king of the Khazars, went out to Azerbaijan and raided many countries. Jarrah, governor of Armenia, encountered him and did battle with him. The Arabs were defeated; some 20,000 were killed

<sup>644</sup> MSyr 11.XXI, 462/500–1. This is the first of a number of uprisings that were to plague Egypt in the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period; see Shaban, *Islamic History*, 164.

<sup>645</sup> Theophanes, 407 (x 2), 409; Agapius, 506–8 (x 4); MSyr 11.XIX, 457/490 | 11.XXI, 462/501 (x 3); *Chron 1234*, 309–10 (x 3). The second two notices in MSyr (dated AG 1039/727–28 and 1042/730–31) are quite different to those in *Chron 1234*; the latter is close to Theophanes and Agapius, who presumably are both drawing on TC. *Chron Zuqnin*, 168–70, gives a long account of these encounters. Cf. *Chron 819*, 17 (1039 AG); Elias of Nisibis, 164–66 (AH 109–113/AG 1038–42/727–31); Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1416, 1428, 1438 (AH 12730–31, 113/731–32, 114/732–33).

<sup>646</sup> Meaning the area where the Khazars held their territory, namely, in the steppe to the north of the Black and Caspian Seas.

<sup>647</sup> This is the Umayyad general Jarrah ibn 'Abdallah al-Hakami, celebrated for his military prowess, especially against the Khazars; see *EI*, 'al-Djarrah b. 'Abdallah'; Crone, *Slaves*, 132.

then and double that number taken captive. | Maslama raided the Khazars, but they defeated him and killed many of his men. Maslama got away by fleeing. | Maslama raided the Turks and got as far as the Gate between them and the Arabs.<sup>648</sup> He could not cross it and so established strongholds there and then left. | Marwan ibn Muhammad raided the Khazars and took many of them captive.

MSyr: **The Arabs invaded the land of the Turks with the emir** and general **Jarrah and captured one big city**.<sup>649</sup> They took abundant booty, pillaged lands and livestock and then returned. | In the year AG 1039 (727–28) Maslama, with a large army, invaded the land of the Turks again.<sup>650</sup> There was a battle for forty days. When the Arabs saw that they could not defeat the Turks, they left their belongings and fled. | At this time the Turks began to migrate: in the year AG 1042 (730–31) the Turks went out into the kingdom of the Arabs. They captured many cities and villages in the land of Azerbaijan. The emir **Maslama** opposed them **with a large army**. When **on both sides** many thousands had been **slain**, the Turks were restrained from attacking the rest of the cities of the Arab kingdom. Those they had taken they held and settled in. The Arabs then made peace with the Turks.

*Chron 1234*: **The emir Jarrah invaded the land of the Turks with Arab troops and captured five cities**. They plundered innumerable goods and left. | The next year the son of the Khagan, king of the Khazars, invaded the land of Azerbaijan and the land of Aran.<sup>651</sup> Jarrah, emir of the country of Armenia, encountered him in it with a large army of Arabs. He fought a violent battle with him and he, Jarrah, was killed. The Khazars plundered his camp and returned in triumph to their country. | In another year **Maslama** invaded the land of the Khazars **with a large army** of Arabs. The Khazars gathered against him together with many of the neighbouring Turks. He waged a battle with them and many fell **slain on both sides**. Maslama was afraid and by trickery and guile he got out of their country.

<sup>648</sup> Presumably the Caspian Gates; see n. 105 above.

<sup>649</sup> This notice only appears in Dionysius. It is perhaps the same as Elias of Nisibis, 163 (AH 104/AG 1034/723), who has Jarrah capture the city of Shaba in Turkish territory. *Chron 819*, 17, has him 'build among the Turks forts and large cities' (AG 1039/727–28).

<sup>650</sup> MSyr 11.XVIII, 452/483, has already noted a raid of Maslama against the Turks, in AG 1026 (714–15), when 'he took many captives and returned'.

<sup>651</sup> Or Arran; this is the Persian name and equates to the Greco-Roman term Albania. The region corresponds approximately to the modern republic of Azerbaijan, whereas Azerbaijan in the Late Roman/Early Islamic period referred to what is now the modern province of Azerbaijan in north-west Iran.



**Betrothal of Leo's son to the Khagan's daughter**<sup>652</sup>

Theophanes: King Leo betrothed his son Constantine to the daughter of the Khagan, that is, the ruler of the Scythians.<sup>653</sup> He made her a Christian and named her Irene. She learned Holy Scripture and lived piously, thus reproving the impiety of those men.

Agapius: Leo, king of the Romans, became related to the king of the Khazars by marrying his son to the latter's daughter. He brought her to him that same year.

MSyr: **King Leo** took the **daughter** of the **Khagan, king of the Khazars**, as a wife for **his son Constantine**. When she was **brought** over, they began by having her **baptised**. Then Leo placed the crown on the head of his son and proclaimed him king. Germanicus, their patriarch (of Constantinople), did the coronation.

*Chron 1234*: **King Leo** sent a messenger to **Khagan, king of the Khazars**, and married **his son Constantine** to the latter's **daughter**. He **brought** the bride (to him), had her **baptised** and introduced her to court.

**(732) Marwan ibn Muhammad is appointed governor of Armenia**<sup>654</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik dispatched Marwan ibn Muhammad as governor over Armenia.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: King Hisham appointed Marwan ibn Muhammad, his nephew, as governor over Armenia and all the neighbouring regions. This Marwan was the one who made his seat at Mayferqat and he named it his capital. Until today the descendants of Marwan are famous there.<sup>655</sup>

<sup>652</sup> Theophanes, 409–10 (probably using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §63); Agapius, 507; MSyr 11.XXI, 463/501; *Chron 1234*, 310.

<sup>653</sup> Their appearance in Herodotus meant that many classicising historians would use this term to apply to any group inhabiting the steppe north of the Black and Caspian Seas; here it is the Khazars who are being referred to.

<sup>654</sup> Agapius, 507; *Chron 1234*, 310. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 170; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1438, and Ibn Khayyat, 359 (AH 114/732–33). Since the notice is very brief, one cannot be sure this is from TC.

<sup>655</sup> The chronicler is mistaken here; the Marwanids who ruled in Mayferqat 380–478/990–

**An outbreak of plague and a sign in the sky**<sup>656</sup>

Theophanes: There was a plague in Syria and many people died. | A fiery sign that gave forth light appeared in the sky.

Agapius: There was a severe plague in Palestine and Egypt. There appeared in the sky something like a sword of fire in October.

MSyr: There was an outbreak of plague.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

**Sulayman ibn Hisham campaigns in Asia Minor**<sup>657</sup>

Theophanes: Sulayman, son of Hisham, invaded the land of Armenia, but did not accomplish anything. | Sulayman, son of Hisham, took many captives in Asia. | Sulayman, son of Hisham, invaded Roman territory and captured the fort called Sideron.<sup>658</sup> He took prisoner Eustathius, son of the patrician Marianus.<sup>659</sup> | In the month of May, indiction 8, Sulayman invaded Roman territory with 90,000 men under four commanders. One of these, Gamer,<sup>660</sup> led the vanguard with 10,000 scouts and set up ambushes in the region of Asia. He was followed by Malik (Melich) and Battal, with 20,000 cavalry, as far as Akroinon,<sup>661</sup> and after them Sulayman, with 60,000 men, advanced

1085 were a Kurdish dynasty that had no relation to the Umayyad Marwan. Incidentally, this tells us that one of the contributors to *Chron 1234* was writing at the time that the Kurdish Marwanids flourished.

<sup>656</sup> Theophanes, 410; Agapius, 508; MSyr 11.XXI, 463/504 (AG 1040). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1450 (AH 115/733).

<sup>657</sup> Theophanes, 410, 411 (x 3); Agapius, 508, 509; *Chron 1234*, 310, 312. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1471, 1511, 1524, 1534 (AH 117/735, 120/738, 121/739, 122/740); Ibn Khayyat, 367, 369; *Chron Zuqnin*, 171–72 (capture of Palozonium by Sulayman), 172 (defeat of Malik ibn Shabib, emir of Melitene, and 'Abdallah ibn Battal). See Lilie, *Byzantinische Reaktion*, 150–54.

<sup>658</sup> Presumably this is the same as Agapius' *swdwr/sdrwn* and possibly also the Sandara of the Muslim sources (e.g. Ibn Khayyat, 310; Tabari, 2.1635); its exact location is unknown.

<sup>659</sup> See PMBZ, 'Eustathios' 1751.

<sup>660</sup> The identity of Gamer is uncertain; Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 561, suggest Ghamr, son of Yazid II; this is plausible inasmuch as he is involved on raids against Byzantium (Brooks, 'Arabs', 202), but in the Muslim sources it is one 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn Bukht who accompanies Malik and Battal. See also no. 379 above.

<sup>661</sup> Modern Afyonkarahisar, in Phrygia, west central Turkey, about 250 km south-west of Ancyra (Ankara).



to the area of Tyana in Cappadocia. Those in Asia and Cappadocia captured many men, women and animals, and returned home unharmed, whereas the contingents of Malik and Battal were fought and defeated by Leo and Constantine at Akroinon. Most of them, including the two commanders, perished by the sword. About 6800 of their warriors, however, fought on and fled to Synnada. They safely joined Sulayman and returned to Syria.<sup>662</sup>

Agapius: (does not have the account of Sulayman achieving nothing). I Sulayman ibn Hisham raided the Romans; he reached Asia and captured a fort known as Sudur and took its people captive. I Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik raided the Romans and while he was besieging Ancyra Hisham went up to Melitene and stayed there a few days. He then returned to Damascus and Maslama conquered Ancyra and took a huge number of captives. I Sulayman ibn Hisham raided the Romans; they defeated him and killed his troops and took captive some 20,000 Arabs. I Sulayman ibn Hisham raided and besieged one of the forts of Asia. Plague afflicted his men and a great many of them died and hunger sorely tried them. The Romans killed a great many of them and most of their horses perished. A substantial body of the men sought refuge in Roman territory and became Christian on account of the severity of what had befallen them. Sulayman returned in flight.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: Sulayman ibn Hisham, brother of the Mu'awiya we have just mentioned, invaded Roman territory, but returned having achieved nothing. I Sulayman invaded Roman territory and King Hisham, his father, came as far as Melitene with the emir Maslama; they returned leading away a huge amount of captives.

<sup>662</sup> This last notice does not seem to be from TC, but more likely derives from a Byzantine source; since the battle resulted in a great victory for the Byzantines, there was good reason for them to record it. *Chron Zuqnin*, 172, gives a quite long and independent account of this Muslim defeat, recording that Malik ibn Shabib accompanied Battal (not Malik ibn Shu'ayb, as stated by Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 571, relying on the *Kitāb al-'Uyūn* via Brooks, 'Arabs', 202); *Chron Zuqnin* also mentions Synnada, which is modern Şuhut in Phrygia. On Battal, a celebrated Muslim fighter against the Byzantines, see *El*, 'al-Baṭṭāl, 'Abd Allāh'.

### A man claims to be son of King Justinian<sup>663</sup>

Theophanes: Among them (the prisoners taken by Sulayman) was a certain native of Pergamon, who claimed to be Tiberius, son of Justinian. In order to honour his own son and to frighten the kings, Hisham dispatched this man to Jerusalem with the appropriate imperial honours, namely a guard of soldiers with banners and sceptres, and decreed that he should tour all of Syria with great pomp so that all should see him and be amazed.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: A man was found from Pergamon in Asia, called Bashir, who was Roman in origin but in attire<sup>664</sup> a Muslim. He went to a Roman man in Harran and informed him of the stratagem that he was about to use. He told him to go and accuse and denounce him before Sulayman as being, without any doubt, Tiberius, son of Constantine, the king of the Romans, who had been supposed dead. This Sulayman, on hearing (this), believed and thought that something momentous had fallen into his hands. He swore to this Roman, named Theophantus, that he would reward him well if he would deliver this false Tiberius into his hands. When he had been handed over, the false Tiberius initially began by denying that he was the said person, deploying guile to make his story more convincing. Finally, he confessed, reluctantly, that: 'I am he.' Sulayman wrote to his father Hisham about the affair of this Tiberius. On hearing this, Hisham, since he wished to aggrandise in the eyes of the Arabs his son who had in his hands the son of the Roman king, ordered (the false Tiberius) to be clothed in royal dress and to have him brought to him. This false Tiberius gave out that he was Christian. When he came to Edessa, he had the audacity to enter within the church sanctuary and to take the host with his own hands from the altar itself in accordance with the custom of the Roman kings. He passed through the other cities. On returning to Mesopotamia, he

<sup>663</sup> Theophanes, 411; MSyr 11.XXI, 462–63/503–504 (AG 1048/736–37); *Chron 1234*, 311–12 (AG 1048). Dionysius calls the pretender Bashir; elsewhere Theophanes, 402 and 405, mentions a certain Beser, a Christian prisoner in Syria who had become a Muslim, then approached the king and become his ally in the promotion of iconoclasm. Scholars usually identify the two (e.g. Griffith 'Bashir/Beser'), but they have different origins (Pergamum and Paphlagonia) and different deaths (*Chron 1234*, 312: crucifixion at Edessa by Sulayman; Theophanes, 414: slain by the sword of the general Artabasduš), so Dionysius may have confused two accounts, wrongly associating the Paphlagonian with Beser.

<sup>664</sup> *Eskimā*: 'attire', or perhaps 'manners'. The word for Muslim in this sentence is *mhaḡḡrāyā*; see n. 379 above.



sent ambassadors to the territory of the Romans, stirring them up to the extent that Leo himself was frightened. Those who had experience of him said he was pagan,<sup>665</sup> that he summoned the Jews to conjure up spirits for him and the head of the Harranians to make predictions for him, by means of a liver, as to how his affair would turn out.

*Chron 1234:* A man came to Sulayman, son of King Hisham, who had once been captured from Pergamon in Asia, called Bashir, who was Roman in origin but in attire a Muslim, that is, an Arab. He said he was Tiberius, son of King Justinian, whom we mentioned above in the days of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan and who was thought to have already died. This Bashir came to a blind Roman man living in Harran called Theophantus and imparted to him the stratagem that he was about to use. He instructed him to go and denounce him before Sulayman as being, indeed, Tiberius, son of Justinian, who remains in hiding, not making himself known. Sulayman, on hearing his words, believed and thought that something momentous had fallen into his hands, if he could catch Tiberius. This blind man extracted promises from Sulayman that he would reward him for this handsomely. He then delivered this false Tiberius into the hands of Sulayman as though Tiberius himself was unaware. When he came before Sulayman, he at first began by denying that he was Tiberius, deploying guile to make his story more convincing. Finally, after many promises had been given to him by Sulayman he confessed, reluctantly, that: 'I am he.' Sulayman wrote informing his father Hisham, king of the Arabs. Since he wished to aggrandise before the Arabs his son, who had captured the son of the Roman king, Hisham wrote to him to clothe him (the false Tiberius) in royal dress and to have him pass through all the cities in procession. Having attained such honour, he first went to Edessa and the Edessans went out to meet him and had him enter in great pomp and ceremony. He had the audacity and insolence to enter and lift up the host from the church sanctuary in accordance with the custom of the Roman kings because of the stupidity of the Edessans who bend and yield to any wind. He acted thus in all the cities. He finally came to King Hisham, who received him, as a king, with honour. When he had spent some time with him, he was sent off to Edessa. He sent ambassadors to the royal city (Constantinople), stirring up the Romans to the extent that King Leo himself was frightened by him. In the end he was exposed and Sulayman ordered that he be crucified in Edessa.

<sup>665</sup> *Ḥanpāyā*: 'pagan', though in this period it can also be used to designate a Muslim.

#### (740) The revolt of Zayd ibn 'Ali at Kufa<sup>666</sup>

[Theophanes: Markets in Damascus were burned by the Iraqis (Hierakites).]<sup>667</sup>

Agapius: Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib revolted at Kufa. He attacked people and killed and took captives in many places.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234:* A man named Yazid ibn Husayn<sup>668</sup> came out from 'Aqula, which is Kufa, in accordance with a pact which he had arranged between him and the people of Kufa. When he had revolted against the king and shown himself, Hisham sent troops to Kufa. None of those who made the pact with him supported him or followed him. They captured him and he was killed. He was of the lineage of their prophet Muhammad.

#### A revolt in Africa<sup>669</sup>

Theophanes: Many Saracens were killed by the Romans in Africa as well, including their commander Damaskenos.<sup>671</sup>

Agapius: The people of Africa rebelled and killed their governor and every Muslim there.

Dionysius: not recorded

<sup>666</sup> Theophanes, 412 (possibly connected: see next footnote); Agapius, 509; *Chron 1234*, 312 (AG 1050/738–39). Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1531–32 (AH 122/740). See Hawting, *First Dynasty*, 106; *El*, 'Zayd b. 'Ali'.

<sup>667</sup> This entry may have some connection with the 'Alid revolt, an expression of pro-'Alid sentiment. It was probably added by the continuator/translator of TC who seems to have been from the Palestine/Syria region; see the introduction above and Appendix 1 below.

<sup>668</sup> Presumably this is a mistake for Zayd ibn 'Ali; Zayd and Yazid do share the same letters in Arabic.

<sup>669</sup> Theophanes, 411; Agapius, 509. This refers to the great Berber revolt which began in AH 122/740 (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1536–37; Hawting, *First Dynasty*, 84) and in the course of which the governor Kulthum ibn 'Iyad al-Qushayri was killed in AH 123 or 124 (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1553, 1561; Ibn Khayyat, 369–70, says AH 124).

<sup>670</sup> Theophanes has just narrated the killing of two Arabs generals and their men in Asia Minor, which explains the 'as well'.

<sup>671</sup> The governor Kulthum was, as is implied here by Theophanes, a Syrian and had been governor of Damascus for the caliph Hisham (Crone, *Slaves*, 128).



**Flooding at Edessa**<sup>672</sup>

Theophanes: Edessa was flooded by its stream on the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month of February.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: **In the month of March, it rained such that one would think the flood-gates of heaven were open** night and day. **The waters accumulated at Edessa and the walls were breached** and **the eastern gates** were pushed open by the great rushing of the flood. A little more and **the whole city would have been destroyed**.

*Chron 1234*: **In the month of March**, on the 24<sup>th</sup>, from morning to evening, **it rained heavily such that one would think the flood-gates of heaven were open** and it caused severe destruction in the city and the villages. **The waters accumulated outside the wall of Edessa and it was breached**. The waters entered in a great torrent and the city was filled. They destroyed houses and villas; markets and mills along the river were ruined and the old church and its chambers were filled (with water). If they had not rushed to open **the eastern gates** to let out the waters, almost **the whole city would have been destroyed** by the waters.

{ **The Romans raid Melitene**: Agapius: The Romans attacked Melitene and caused ruin and destruction in its villages; they took the Romans who were in them and brought them into Roman territory. }<sup>673</sup>

**(740) An earthquake at Constantinople**<sup>674</sup>

Theophanes: A violent and fearful earthquake occurred at Constantinople on 26 October, indiction 9, a Wednesday, in the 8<sup>th</sup> hour...

Agapius: There occurred in Constantinople a great earthquake and all the houses fell down. The mountains began to send forth waters.

<sup>672</sup> Theophanes, 412 (cf. 404); Msyr 11.XXI, 463/504–505; *Chron 1234*, 312. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 176–77 (AG 1054/742–43).

<sup>673</sup> Agapius, 510. Again the interesting question arises as to who were Romans (*rūm*) and who were not. Soldiers (as opposed to civilians) cannot be meant here (see nn. 56 and 280 above); but it could be Chalcedonians (as opposed to Miaphysites or Muslims), Greek-speakers (as opposed to Syriac- or Arabic-speakers) or Greeks (as opposed to Syrians or Arabs).

<sup>674</sup> Theophanes, 412 (gives a detailed account from a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §63); Agapius, 509; Msyr 11.XXI, 463/504 (AG 1050/738–39).

MSyr: There was an earthquake at Constantinople and much of the city collapsed.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

**Hisham orders the killing of Roman prisoners**<sup>675</sup>

Theophanes: Hisham, the ruler of the Arabs, put to death the Christian prisoners in all the towns in his realm, among them the blessed Eustathius, son of the distinguished patrician Marianus. He did not abjure his pure faith in spite of much violence and he proved to be a true martyr at Harran, a notable city of Mesopotamia, where his precious and holy relics work all manner of healing by God's grace. Many others, too, met their death in martyrdom and blood.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: There was a decree<sup>676</sup> from **Hisham**, king of the Arabs, that **all the Roman prisoners** that were in the hands of the Arabs should be **killed**. He did that because he had heard it said that **Leo had killed the Arab prisoners**, which was not true. When **Eustathius** and his companions bore witness at **Harran**, **there was doubt** whether they should be accepted as **martyrs or not**.

*Chron 1234*: **Hisham** received a false report that King **Leo had killed all the Arab prisoners** who were in Roman territory. Without checking it carefully, he was filled with anger and sent word to his son Sulayman to **kill all the Roman prisoners** in his realm. **Eustathius**, son of Marianus, who was imprisoned at **Harran**, was killed. **There was doubt** among many as to whether those who were killed could be considered true **martyrs or not**, something known only to God alone.

**(741) Leo III dies and his son Constantine V succeeds him**<sup>677</sup>

Theophanes: In the 9<sup>th</sup> indiction, on 18 June, Leo died the death not only of

<sup>675</sup> Theophanes, 414; Msyr 11.XXI, 463/501; *Chron 1234*, 313. On Eustathius son of Marianus see n. 659 above.

<sup>676</sup> Using the Greek term (*apophasis*).

<sup>677</sup> Theophanes, 413 (he gives a long review of Leo's iniquities from a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §64); Agapius, 509 | 511; Msyr 11.XXI, 463/502 (AG 1053/741–42); *Chron 1234*, 313 (AG 1052 and AH 123/741). See *ODB*, 'Constantine V, king (741–75)'.



his soul but also of his body and his son Constantine became king...

Agapius: Leo, king of the Romans, died after reigning for twenty-three years and three and a half months. His son Constantine ruled after him for thirty-four years, from the year AG 1042<sup>678</sup> (730–31).

MSyr: Leo died after reigning for twenty-four years and then his son Constantine reigned.

*Chron 1234*: Leo died after reigning for twenty-four years; his son Constantine reigned after him.

#### (741–42) The revolt of Artabasdos<sup>679</sup>

Theophanes: On 27 June of the following 10th indiction Constantine marched forth against the Arabs and came to a place called Krasos<sup>680</sup> in the region of Opsikion. Now the aforesaid Artabasdos was at Dorylaion<sup>681</sup> with the Opsikion army and they eyed each other suspiciously... Constantine fled to Amorion where he sought refuge with the Anatolian troops... who protected him and he extended to them great promises... The Arabs, aware of the internecine war between those two men, made many captives in Roman territory under Sulayman's command...

Agapius: A rebel called Artabasdos (Artabaz or Artaban) came out against Constantine, king of the Romans. He entered Constantinople and took the rule for himself while Constantine was absent (from it). When the news reached Constantine, he returned, seeking him out. They engaged and while they were in battle Sulayman (ibn Hisham) raided Roman territory. He got as far as Paphlagonia and no one opposed him because they were busy with the (civil) war. He killed 50,000 men there. | Artabasdos the rebel went out from Constantinople seeking King Constantine; he engaged him, but was defeated. The Anatolians and all his men were killed.

<sup>678</sup> This is presumably a mistake for AG 1052/740–41.

<sup>679</sup> Theophanes, 414–15 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §64); Agapius, 510; MSyr 11.XXI, 463/502; *Chron 1234*, 313–14. See *ODB*, 'Artabasdos, usurper (742–43)'; Speck, *Artabasdos*, esp. 283–95.

<sup>680</sup> Unidentified, but probably north-west of Dorylaion (see next note), on the road to Nicaea (modern Iznik).

<sup>681</sup> Near modern Eskişehir in Phrygia, modern north-west Turkey, 140 km south-east of Nicaea. Theophanes has just explained how the Romans, despondent at the misdeeds of Leo, took up the cause of his brother-in-law Artabasdos, who was head of the province of Opsikion.

MSyr: Artabasdos (Artabas), brother-in-law of the king, revolted against him. He entered Constantinople and occupied the palace. Constantine was outside the city and he fled from Opsikion.<sup>682</sup> He sought refuge with the Anatolians, who promised to help him. He went with them to Amorion, a city of Phrygia, and wintered there. Artabasdos gathered troops and came against him. When they engaged in battle, Artabasdos was defeated and fled; those who had followed him went back to the king.

*Chron 1234*: Artabasdos (Artabas), brother-in-law of the king, revolted. He entered Constantinople and occupied the palace and called himself king. Constantine was outside the city. When the king heard that his brother-in-law had assumed the rule, he went and sought refuge with the legion of the Anatolians, who pledged to help him. He led them to Constantinople and stayed near it all summer. He set off for Amorion, in Asia, and wintered in it. At the turn of the year Artabasdos gathered many troops, left Constantinople and came towards the king. The king met with him and they engaged in battle. Artabasdos turned tail and fled alone; his companions returned and submitted to the king.

#### (743) Hisham dies and his nephew Walid ibn Yazid succeeds him<sup>683</sup>

Theophanes: Hisham, the leader of the Arabs, died. | Walid, Hisham's son, became ruler of the Arabs.<sup>684</sup> Both Constantine and Artabasdos sought his alliance by sending an envoy to him; the former sent the *spatharios* Andrew, the latter the *logothete* Gregory.<sup>685</sup>

Agapius: Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik died and Walid ibn Yazid reigned after him for one year and two months. At the beginning of his reign he mistreated

<sup>682</sup> MSyr has *men opsikiyūn dīleh*, implying that he understood the word not as referring to the Opsikion *thema* (which was loyal to Artabasdos and that is why Constantine was fleeing from it), but as the word for imperial officials/retinue (from the Latin *obsequium*). Possibly a translation from Greek lie behind this.

<sup>683</sup> Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 510; MSyr 11.XXI, 463/502 (AG 1056/744–45); *Chron 1234*, 314 (AG 1054/742–43). Cf. Tabari, 2.1729–30, 1750–51; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1573–74, 1583 (Rabi' II AH 125/Feb 743). See Marsham, *Rituals*, 160 etc.; Judd, 'Re-interpreting al-Walid ibn Yazid'.

<sup>684</sup> This is incorrect; Walid II was a nephew of Hisham, son of Hisham's brother Yazid II. He was the fifteenth caliph of the Muslims; he reigned 125–126/743–744; see *EI*, 'al-Walid II'.

<sup>685</sup> See *PMBZ*, 'Andreas' 387 and 'Gregorios' 2382; *spatharios* is a senior military officer (see n. 558 above) and *logothete* a senior administrative official.



the household of Hisham greatly. Constantine, king of the Romans, sent an envoy to Walid with many gifts; as also did the rebel Artabasduš.

**MSyr:** Hisham, king of the Arabs, died after reigning for nineteen years. Walid ibn Yazid ruled. He mistreated the people of Hisham's household and plundered their houses. He empowered over his kingdom 'Abbas, son of King Walid.<sup>686</sup> When he fell upon the gold of the empire, which was like the sea, he desired to seize the rule. He won over to himself the chiefs of the Arabs by ascribing to Walid odious vices.<sup>687</sup> Yet the king trusted him as he trusted himself.

*Chron 1234:* Hisham, king of the Arabs, died. Walid ibn Yazid took up the rule of the Arabs after him. When he came to power, before anything else, he mistreated the people of Hisham's household – his secretaries, even his treasurers – with sentences and cruel torments, and he plundered their houses. He empowered over the whole running of his kingdom 'Abbas, son of Walid. This is the 'Abbas after whom are named those in Baghdad who rule in our day and are called 'Abbasid caliphs<sup>688</sup> and from him they have this name and it is not, as some uneducated Arabs think and say, from the name of 'Abbas, uncle of their prophet Muhammad.<sup>689</sup> When this 'Abbas came to be in charge of the treasury of the kingdom and when he fell upon the sea of gold of the house of Hisham, he desired to seize the rule from Walid. He deceitfully won over to himself all the chiefs of the Arabs by ascribing to Walid all manner of odious vices. Yet the king trusted him as he trusted himself.

{**Hisham and patriarch Stephen:** Theophanes: Hisham had been on friendly terms with a Syrian monk called Stephen, a man who was rather simple, but pious. Seeing that the most holy see of Antioch had been vacant for forty years, for the Arabs had forbidden that a patriarch should be

<sup>686</sup> I.e. 'Abbas son of Walid I; like Walid II, 'Abbas was a grandson of 'Abd al-Malik and nephew of Hisham and a very senior member of the Umayyad clan. See n. 550 above.

<sup>687</sup> Tabari, 2.1776, says: 'Walid was a devotee of games, hunting and pleasures', and this image of him is found in many Muslim accounts. It also made its way into Christian sources; e.g. *Chron 819*, 17–18, says of Walid: 'a man given to hunting and fond of games, pleasure, hunting and drinking'.

<sup>688</sup> *Kalīfē*: from the Arabic word *khalīfa*.

<sup>689</sup> This is a rather startling assertion, since Muslim sources are unanimous that Abbasid comes from the name of the prophet Muhammad's uncle. Most likely this idea comes not from TC, but from a later contributor to *Chron 1234*, such as the one who thought that the eleventh-century Marwanids of Mayferqat were descended from the Marwanid branch of the Umayyads (see n. 655 above).

appointed there, (Hisham permitted) the eastern Christians, if they wished to be allowed to have a patriarch, to elect this Stephen. They, believing that this was happening by God's will, ordained him to the throne of Antioch. This dispensation has prevailed from that time until now.<sup>690</sup>

### A drought, famine and earthquakes<sup>691</sup>

Theophanes: There was much drought and earthquakes occurred in several places so that mountains were joined to one another in the desert of Saba<sup>692</sup> and villages were swallowed up by the earth.

Agapius: The rains were few in this year and springs and rivers diminished; there was a great famine and there were many different earthquakes.

**MSyr:** There was a scarcity of rain and there was a great famine. Cultivators and farmers were reduced to looking for work to put bread in their mouths, but there was no one at all who wanted them. There were frequent earthquakes, even in the desert of the Arabs; mountains joined together and villages were swallowed up.

*Chron 1234:* There was a scarcity of rain and there was a famine and much pestilence.

### Monkeys attack people in Yemen<sup>693</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: The monkeys attacked people in Yemen; they were driven in flight from their houses and many of them were killed.

**MSyr:** In the land of Yemen the monkeys threw themselves on people, chased them from their dwellings and injured many.

*Chron 1234:* not recorded

<sup>690</sup> Theophanes, 416. See *PMBZ*, 'Stephanos' 6986.

<sup>691</sup> Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 510; *MSyr* 11.XXII, 464–65/506–507 (AG 1056/744–45); *Chron 1234*, 314. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 177–79 (AG 1055/743–44).

<sup>692</sup> I.e. Sheba in south Arabia; presumably Theophanes is just using this term for effect, to dramatise how far the earthquakes extended.

<sup>693</sup> Agapius, 511; *MSyr* 11.XXII, 465/507.



**Ghamr ibn Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik campaigns in Asia Minor**<sup>694</sup>

Theophanes: Ghamr invaded Roman territory with a multitude of Arabs and returned after taking many captives.

Agapius: 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz raided the Romans, killed and took captives.

Dionysius: not recorded

**A sign in the sky**<sup>695</sup>

Theophanes: In the month of June a sign appeared in the sky to the north.

Agapius: There appeared in the sky in June a great sign like columns<sup>696</sup> of fire that flickered and then remained constant. This was the prelude; another appeared in September, like a flame of fire stretching from east to west.

MSyr: In the month of June a sign appeared in the sky, in the form of three columns and resembling a flame of fire. In the month of September the same sign could be seen.

*Chron 1234*: On the 17th of the month of June a sign appeared in the sky, in the form of three columns and resembling a flame of fire.

**Walid punishes and exiles the metropolitan of Damascus**<sup>697</sup>

Theophanes: Walid ordered that Peter, the most holy metropolitan of Damascus, should have his tongue cut off because he was publicly reproving the impiety of the Arabs and the Manicheans, and he exiled him to Yemen (Arabia Felix) where he died a martyr for Christ after reciting the holy liturgy. Those who have told the story affirm to have heard it with their own ears.<sup>698</sup>

<sup>694</sup> Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 511, who wrongly gives the name of the general as 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1575 (AH 125/743).

<sup>695</sup> Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 511; MSyr 11.XXII, 465/507 (AG 1056/744-45); *Chron 1234*, 314.

<sup>696</sup> *Asāfīn*, from Syriac *estūnā*, which is the word used here by MSyr and *Chron 1234* and which is itself derived either from Greek *stylos* or, more likely, from Persian *sutūn*.

<sup>697</sup> Theophanes, 416; MSyr 11.XXII, 464/506 (AG 1056/744-45); *Chron 1234*, 314.

<sup>698</sup> Theophanes continues with the account of the martyrdom of Peter of Maiouma, who allegedly died in 715; on the relationship between the two Peters see my *Seeing Islam*, 354-60.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: Walid, king of the Arabs, ordered that the tongue be cut out of the patriarch whom the Chalcedonians had appointed in Syria and he was exiled to the land of Yemen.

*Chron 1234*: The bishop of the Chalcedonians in Damascus was delivered up to King Walid for reviling the prophet of the Arabs. His tongue was cut out and he was exiled to the land of Yemen.

**Walid resettles the inhabitants of Cyprus in Syria**<sup>699</sup>

Theophanes: Walid transferred the Cypriots to Syria.

Agapius: Walid ibn Yazid ordered that the people of Cyprus be deported from their homeland and country and be settled at al-Māhūr,<sup>700</sup> which is on the sea coast between Tyre and Sidon.

Dionysius: not recorded

**A sign and dust in the sky**<sup>701</sup>

Theophanes: A sign appeared in the north and in some places dust fell down from heaven. There was also an earthquake at the Caspian Gates.

Agapius: Another sign appeared in January, in the form of a moon. The atmosphere was gloomy and dark.

MSyr: There appeared in the sky the like of a half-moon, in the northern sector. Gradually, over a long time, it passed into the southern sector, then returned to the north and descended to the earth. In the same year, from the beginning of March to the middle of April, a sort of dust filled the whole

<sup>699</sup> Theophanes, 417; Agapius, 511. Cf. Baladhuri, 154 ('because of some matter he suspected them of'); Tabari, 2.1769 (AH 125/743), says the Cypriots were given a choice of going to Syria or Byzantium. Note that Agapius, 512, says that the caliph Yazid 'returned the people of Cyprus to the land that Walid had removed them from'.

<sup>700</sup> Sauvaget, 'Notes de topographie omeyyade', 97-98, says this is al-Māhūr, just north of Beirut, where an inscription was found, probably commemorating the building by Walid II of a town for these emigrants.

<sup>701</sup> Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 511; MSyr 11.XXII, 465/507 (AG 1057/745-46); *Chron 1234*, 314. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 195 (AG 1054/742-43).



**atmosphere** and it was gloomy. **All day** the dust swirled about in many places, and towards nine o'clock it formed a dark shroud and **it obscured the sun's rays**.

*Chron 1234*: Dust filled the whole atmosphere. All day it obscured the sun's rays.

**(743) Constantine kills the rebel Artabasdu<sup>702</sup>**

Theophanes: In the month of September, indiction 12, Constantine came to the area of Chalcedon and crossed to Thrace, while Sisinnius, general of the Thracians, had crossed by way of Abydos and laid siege to the land walls... On 2 November he (Constantine) suddenly drew up his forces in the evening and took the city through the land walls... Artabasdu, with his two sons, he blinded... He killed many other prominent men who had assisted Artabasdu, blinded a multitude without number and cut off the arms and legs of others.

Agapius: Constantine, king of the Romans, entered Constantinople, captured the rebel who had risen up against him, killed him and sat back on the throne again. This was in the year AG 1040 (738–39) and 127 of the Arabs (744–45).

MSyr: When Constantine entered Constantinople, he gouged out the eyes of the tyrant Artabasdu and he flourished in his rule. A son was born to him by the daughter of the Khagan and he called him Leo. The Roman realm was at peace, for the Arabs were mired in civil war.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded.

<sup>702</sup> Theophanes, 419–21 (using a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §66); Agapius, 515; MSyr 11.XXII, 465/506.

### SECTION 3

#### THE THIRD ARAB CIVIL WAR AND RISE OF THE ABBASIDS<sup>703</sup>

##### **(744) The overthrow of Walid II and accession of Yazid III<sup>704</sup>**

Theophanes: Walid was killed by the Arabs on 16 April, a Thursday, after a reign of one year, and power was seized by Yazid the Deficient.<sup>705</sup> This man took Damascus thanks to large distributions of money<sup>706</sup> and received pledges of submission from the Arabs in Damascus, Persia and Egypt.

Agapius: Walid ibn Yazid was killed at Palmyra. The reason for his killing was that Yazid, known as the Deficient, was from the Qadariyya<sup>707</sup> and he had travelled to Damascus in secret, gathered the like-minded men of the

<sup>703</sup> TC gives a considerable amount of information about the events of this civil war and the ensuing rise of the Abbasid dynasty; this lends some credence to the claim of the author of TC to have been 'a constant witness of these wars' (cited by Agapius below). The account is for the most part very close to that given by Muslim sources, though there are a few interesting divergences. This is a very large topic and this volume is not the place to enter into the myriad discussions about these events, so in what follows I shall not attempt to correlate all the events with the vast secondary literature on them. The reader wanting to know more should use the *EI* and *Elr*, and consult the following: Agha, *Revolution* (includes a useful survey of participants in the revolution on pages 327–79); Arjomand, 'Ibn al-Muqaffa'; Blankinship, 'Tribal Factor'; Elad, 'Aspects' and 'Ethnic Composition'; Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*; Lassner, *Shaping of Abbasid Rule*; Omar, 'Abbasid Caliphate'; Shaban, 'Abbasid Revolution'; Sharon, *Black Banners and Revolt*.

<sup>704</sup> Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 511–12; MSyr 11.XXI, 463–64/502–3; *Chron 1234*, 315–16 (AG 1055/743–44).

<sup>705</sup> *Ho leipso*, which literally renders Arabic *al-nāqis*; possibly this is a direct translation from the Arabic, for Dionysius just calls Yazid a tyrant (in *Chron 1234*). Yazid was labelled 'deficient' either because he cut back on people's pensions or because of some physical disability/inadequacy. He was the sixteenth caliph of the Muslims, reigning for ca. six months in 126/744. See *EI*, 'Yazid III b. al-Walid'.

<sup>706</sup> Cf. Tabari, 2.1797: 'Yazid issued a proclamation that anyone who went with (his brother) 'Abd al-'Aziz (against Walid II) would receive 2000 silver coins each.'

<sup>707</sup> Agapius writes Badriyya, which is meaningless. The Qadariyya were advocates of human free will and would seem to have sought more accountability for the office of the caliph; for the significance of their participation in this civil war see van Ess, 'Les Qadarites'.



Qadariyya, seized the city, destroyed the royal treasuries and dispatched a large army with 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn al-Hajjaj<sup>708</sup> to Walid to kill him. Walid had gone out to raid an Arab tribe and had reached Palmyra. When Walid ibn Yazid had been killed, Yazid the Deficient took the two sons of Walid ibn Yazid, 'Uthman and Yazid,<sup>709</sup> and imprisoned them. When 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn al-Hajjaj returned with the head of Walid, he (Yazid) ordered it to be put on a lance, to have wine sprinkled on it and to be paraded around the city, announcing that 'this is the head of the wine-lover'.<sup>710</sup> When the Arabs came to know of the killing of Walid, they were troubled and divided and their opinion was split. Sedition, trials and brigandage occurred, alarm prevailed in every place and the people were sorely afflicted.

**MSyr: While Walid was in the desert, 'Abbas planned to rule, but the Arabs did not accept that because 'Abbas was the son of a concubine.**<sup>711</sup> They scorned Walid because he drank wine and did other bad things. That is why they made Yazid, his brother, king in Damascus. As soon as he began to reign, **he sent an army to fight his brother in the desert. They caught up with him without him suspecting anything. They cut off his head, fixed it on a lance and carried it on high into Damascus; they attached to it a goat-skin of wine.** Thereafter many began to covet the rule among their royal family. They gave themselves up to violent fighting and numerous wars, each one of them fielding their own army of men loyal to him. **In the western region was Yazid, who was the source of the trouble, and there was also Sakasi and Sulayman ibn Hisham. In Mesopotamia there arose Bistam, who had a sect attached to him: the Bayhasiya. At Mosul there was Sa'id ibn Bahdal, head of another sect, called the Murgaye. In the**

<sup>708</sup> Brother of Yazid III and 'Abbas and another grandson of 'Abd al-Malik and nephew of Hisham.

<sup>709</sup> This should read 'Uthman and Hakam, as given correctly by *Chron 1234* below.

<sup>710</sup> The parading of Walid's head around Damascus is confirmed by Muslim sources (e.g. Tabari, 2.1807–9), which date his death to Thursday, 27 Jumada II AH 126/16 April 744 (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1595–96, 1608). Theophanes alone of Christian sources gives this same day and date, probably inserted by the continuator/translator of TC.

<sup>711</sup> TC makes 'Abbas ibn Walid instrumental in the revolt of his brother Yazid whereas Muslim sources have him dissuading Yazid from rebellion and only joining him once Walid's defeat was imminent (Tabari, 2.1784–85, 1787, 1797–99), or even opposing Yazid outright (Ya'qubi, 2.401). He was indeed the son of a concubine, a Christian one in fact; this was perfectly common (e.g. Yazid III's mother was a concubine, allegedly the daughter of Firuz son of Yazdgird, the last Persian king), but she was a slave rather than a free woman, which was looked down upon (the highly competent generals, Maslama, son of 'Abd al-Malik, and Muhammad ibn Marwan, half-brother of 'Abd al-Malik, were passed over for the same reason).

**land of the Persians, at Wasit, 'Abdallah, son of King 'Umar, prevailed. In Armenia was Marwan, in Khurasan Bar Sarig and in Africa Abu Duhayl.**<sup>712</sup> Just as there was much confusion among the Arabs, also their affairs proceeded in confusion. In all their lands government was greatly impaired.

*Chron 1234: While he (Walid) was in the desert, at al-Bakhra,*<sup>713</sup> because he loved amusement, debauchery, hunting and wine-drinking, 'Abbas, to whom he had entrusted his rule, since he ('Abbas) was the son of a maid-servant and he knew that **the Arabs would not accept the son of a concubine** to rule over them, sent his brother Yazid, son of a free woman, to Damascus, because there the treasures of the kingdom were collected. After he had entered the city Yazid shut the gates and posted guards so that no one would go and warn the king. The governor of the city he captured and killed. He opened the treasury and to the chiefs and the troops who were with him he gave fifty gold coins per person on top of gifts to them. He put 'Abd al-'Aziz in charge of a force of 2000 troops and sent him to fight King Walid. And he informed 'Abbas, his brother, of the day in which they would be at the place where the king would be encamped on such a day. Walid **did not suspect** any treachery at all and it did not occur to him that he would encounter any harm from his brother 'Abbas. The troops were therefore able to come upon him suddenly. It happened that there was with him a man called Abrash ibn Walid. He did not cease to delay and hinder the king lest he go out and confront those coming to kill him, for he was a partner and participant in the treachery.<sup>714</sup> Thus he delayed the king until they suddenly attacked him and killed him. **They cut off his head, put it on a lance and carried it on high into Damascus. They attached on to it a goat-skin of**

<sup>712</sup> These various powerbrokers are: Yazid III, Mu'awiya al-Saksaki (unless Yazid ibn 'Anbasa al-Saksaki is meant, who was a confidant of Yazid III), Sulayman ibn Hisham (son of the caliph Hisham), Bistam al-Bayhasi (a Kharijite), Sa'id ibn Bahdal (also a Kharijite, and not of the Murgaye/Murji'iya as Msyr says), 'Abdallah ibn 'Umar (son of 'Umar II and governor of Iraq for Yazid III), Marwan ibn Muhammad (a nephew of 'Abd al-Malik and the future caliph Marwan II), Harith ibn Surayj (who would be better described as a leader of the Murgaye/Murji'iya; on him and this sect see *El*, 'al-Harith b. Suraydj') and Abu Hudhayl (who is unknown).

<sup>713</sup> Muslim sources say Walid only went to the fort of al-Bakhra after he had heard of Yazid III's capture of Damascus (Tabari, 2.1796–97), or at least after Yazid had declared his intentions (Ya'qubi, 2.400).

<sup>714</sup> Abrash was the nickname of Sa'id ibn Walid of the tribe of Kalb, who was a close adviser of the caliph Hisham. *Chron 1234* makes him a participant in the plot against Walid II, which is unknown to Muslim sources, except that he appears to go over to Yazid when Walid's defeat is imminent (Tabari, 2.1805; though cf. 2.1896).



wine, in mockery of him, as if to say: 'Here is a wine-drinker.' The two sons of King Walid, Hakam and 'Uthman, they shut up in the prison. To them the Arabs had given an oath of agreement that they would rule after their father. They also imprisoned their maternal uncle, the grandson of Yazid, son of King Mu'awiya.<sup>715</sup>

So Yazid, the tyrant of Damascus, prevailed and was king and from then on battles broke out in every region. The residents of Hims held their city and region and killed Bashir ibn 'Abdallah, emir of Hims, because he followed King Yazid. They pulled down and destroyed the villas, taverns, inns and all the property that belonged to 'Abbas in their city in their zeal for the murdered king.<sup>716</sup> They were saying that even Marwan ibn Muhammad, the emir of Mesopotamia, who at this time was made governor of Armenia, was party to the killing of Walid, since on the same day as the king was killed his (Marwan's) son, 'Abd al-Malik, entered Harran. Now after the killing of Walid everyone sought to gain troops for himself. **In the west Yazid, who was the source of the civil war,**<sup>717</sup> was reigning, and there was another man called Sakasi and also Sulayman ibn Hisham. **In Mesopotamia there was Bistam, who had a sect attached to him. In Mosul there was Sa'id ibn Bahdal, head of another sect, called the Murgaye. In the land of the Persians, at Wasit, 'Abdallah, son of King 'Umar, prevailed. In Armenia there was Marwan ibn Muhammad, in Khurasan Bar Sarigi, in Africa Abu Duhayl,** together with many other chiefs of the Arabs.

{ **Yazid repatriates the Cypriots:** Agapius: Yazid the Deficient returned the people of Cyprus to the land that Walid had evicted them from. }<sup>718</sup>

**(744) Yazid III dies, Ibrahim succeeds him, but Marwan II rebels**<sup>719</sup>

Theophanes: When, however, these matters had been reported to Marwan ibn Muhammad (Marouam son of Mouamed), the governor of Armenia,

715 Namely Ziyad ibn 'Abdallah ibn Yazid ibn Mu'awiya, who was related to Walid II through the latter's grandmother and who had been sent by Walid to be governor of Damascus upon hearing of the rebellion of Yazid III.

716 For the insurrection in Hims, and especially the targeting of 'Abbas' family and property, see Tabari, 2.1826–30, who gives the name of the governor whom the Himsis kill as Marwan ibn 'Abdallah, and also Shaban, *Islamic History*, 157.

717 The chronicler uses the Arabic word for civil war, *fitna*, transliterating it as *ptnā*.

718 Agapius, 512.

719 Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 512–13; Msyr 11.XXI, 464/503; *Chron 1234*, 316–17. From here until the end of TC, Msyr only gives a heavily abbreviated account of Muslim affairs.

he arrived in Mesopotamia, ostensibly to support Walid's sons and oppose Yazid.<sup>720</sup> Five months later Yazid died, leaving his brother Ibrahim (Abraim) to succeed him at Damascus.<sup>721</sup> Marwan made war on him, having on his side the men of Mesopotamia.

Agapius: Sulayman ibn Hisham was imprisoned, but got out, came to Damascus and (he and) his men pledged allegiance to Yazid ibn Walid. Marwan ibn Muhammad was in Armenia, as we have said. He did not pledge allegiance to Yazid, but departed from Armenia to Mesopotamia. He sent for their Arabs and they pledged allegiance to him. He resolved to cross the Euphrates and seek out Yazid the Deficient to fight him and demand from him the blood of Walid. Yazid died after reigning five months and his son Ibrahim<sup>722</sup> reigned after him. The people pledged allegiance to him, except for Marwan ibn Muhammad and the people of Hims, whose opinion was with Marwan.

MSyr: **After five months, in which he had held possession** (of power), **Yazid was afflicted by a tumour of the head and died. After him his brother Ibrahim became king,** an easy-going and good-natured man, who was praised for his many fine qualities. After a few days he died.<sup>723</sup>

*Chron 1234:* The tyrant **Yazid, after he had held possession** of Damascus, distributed many gifts to the Arabs and they all inclined to him. **After five months he was afflicted by a tumour of the head and died. After him the Damascenes set up as king over them his brother Ibrahim,** who was a man of fine repute. However, the rule did not rest firmly in his hands, for it was kept by God for one who was, more than any other man, cruel, wicked and devoid of compassion, the one whom King Hisham had made governor of Armenia. This man, Marwan, of whom we are speaking, set out from Armenia, giving the impression that he was motivated by zeal to restore the rule to the sons of Walid. He came as far as Harran, since King Yazid,

720 Tabari, 2.1873 and 1876, says Marwan initially opposed Yazid, claiming the murder of Walid and imprisonment of his sons as his pretext, but then paid allegiance to Yazid when the latter offered him governorship of Mesopotamia and Armenia.

721 Yazid III died in Dhu l-Hijja AH 126/Sept–Oct 744 (Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1609). He was succeeded by his brother, Ibrahim, who was the seventeenth caliph of the Muslims, but he was not universally recognised and it is unclear how long he actually ruled; some say that he quickly paid allegiance to Marwan II; see *EI*, 'Ibrahim b. al-Walid'.

722 Ibrahim was Yazid III's brother, not his son.

723 He only ruled for a few days (and even then was not accepted by all), but it was quite a while longer before he died (see below).



brother of 'Abbas, had not yet died, and at Harran he remained. News came to him of the death of the tyrant Yazid and of the accession of his brother Ibrahim and he then marched to the west with his troops.

**(744) Marwan defeats Sulayman ibn Hisham who takes flight<sup>724</sup>**

Theophanes: He (Marwan) marched to Edessa<sup>725</sup> and thence to the region of Damascus and the Antilebanon to a plain called 'Ayn Gara (Garis),<sup>726</sup> where he gave battle to Sulayman (son of Hisham) by the river Litas – that is, the evil river<sup>727</sup> – routed him and killed 20,000. Sulayman fled with a few men and found refuge at Damascus. When he had entered the city he slew Walid's sons, whom Marwan appeared to be supporting, and then left Damascus after laying his hands on a considerable sum of money.<sup>728</sup>

Agapius: Then Marwan crossed the Euphrates with many troops. People imagined that he was intending to free the two sons of Walid imprisoned in Damascus and that he would make them king in the place of their father. When the approach of Marwan reached Ibrahim, he dispatched 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn al-Hajjaj with many troops to the people of Hims because they had not pledged allegiance to him and he sent his brother Masrur with a large army to Aleppo to Bishr, who was staying there. 'Abd al-'Aziz marched to Hims, besieged it and fought its people, who were expecting Marwan to come to them. Marwan headed for Damascus and conquered Aleppo and seized Bishr and Masrur, the sons of al-Hajjaj.<sup>729</sup> When 'Abd al-'Aziz heard that

<sup>724</sup> Theophanes, 418–19; Agapius, 513–14; Msyr 11.XXII, 464/505, *Chron 1234*, 317–18. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1617–18 (battle of 'Ayn al-Jarr: 7 Safar AH 127/18 November 744; Marwan proclaimed caliph: 26 Safar AH 127/7 December 744).

<sup>725</sup> Probably to be read as Emesa, i.e. Hims, as in Agapius and Dionysius.

<sup>726</sup> 'Ayn al-Jarr, modern Anjar; see n. 552 above. The battle is narrated in Tabari, 2.1877–78, and Ya'qubi, 2.403.

<sup>727</sup> The river Litani is the principal river of southern Lebanon. The explanation of its name as 'the evil river' is a play on the Syriac word *lītā*, which is the passive participle of the verb *lwā*, 'to curse, damn'. Its classical name was Leontes, meaning 'lions'.

<sup>728</sup> The same elements of Sulayman's actions are narrated by Tabari, 2.1878–79 and 1890, namely: flight to Damascus, killing of the sons of Walid II and plundering of the treasury. Ibn Khayyat, 392, has a very similar account, but says little about Sulayman, focusing on Ibrahim and the murder of the sons of Walid II.

<sup>729</sup> Agapius has made Bishr and Masrur sons of Hajjaj ibn 'Abd al-Malik, whereas they were sons of Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik and so brothers of Yazid III and Ibrahim. Agapius' account is very close in this notice to that related by Ibn Khayyat, 391–92, and Tabari, 2.1876–77.

Marwan had conquered Aleppo and taken his sons captive, he journeyed from Hims by night and returned to Damascus. Marwan travelled to Hims and its people went out to him and pledged allegiance to him. Then he headed for Damascus seeking Ibrahim. When Ibrahim heard of his coming, he sent Sulayman ibn Hisham with an army to meet him. So Sulayman set off from Damascus and arrived at a village between Lebanon and Tell Gara.<sup>730</sup> Marwan came out to him and engaged him. Marwan made it seem as though he were heading for Jordan and prepared an ambush for him from behind. So Marwan's party filed away and Sulayman went out with his men in pursuit of them. When they (Sulayman's army) were thus divided and their unity was broken, the ambush came out from behind them and put them to the sword, falling upon their soldiers and their riches, which they plundered, killing everyone they could. When Sulayman and his men heard the news, they gave up and took to flight. Marwan and his men turned upon them and put them to death. That day 12,000 men were slaughtered. Sulayman ibn Hisham got away with a small band of his men. Ibrahim carried off the wealth of Damascus and he and Sulayman ibn Hisham fled together from it. 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn al-Hajjaj entered the prison and killed the two sons of Walid ibn Yazid. Then he went to his residence, but the people of the city fought him; fire was thrown on his house and it burned down.

MSyr: Marwan went out from Armenia and confronted Sulayman on the banks of the Euphrates.<sup>731</sup> **12,000 were killed** from among those called *zabūnāyē*.<sup>732</sup> Sulayman fled to **Rusafa**.

*Chron 1234*: He (Marwan) marched to the west with his troops; on reaching the walls of Hims he heard that Masrur, son of Walid, was besieging it because the people of Hims did not submit to Ibrahim. Marwan then sent his son 'Ubaydallah with a large army; he confronted Masrur and engaged in battle with him and Masrur was defeated and killed together with many troops. Those who survived went and joined with the forces of Sulayman (ibn Hisham), who was encamped at 'Ayn Gara. Marwan went and besieged Hims. Its inhabitants came out to meet him and made a pact with him. So he went to do battle with Sulayman who was fighting on behalf of Ibrahim

<sup>730</sup> To be identified with Theophanes' Garis, *Chron 1234*'s 'Ayn Gara and Arabic 'Ayn al-Jarr.  
<sup>731</sup> Presumably a mistake for the river Litani.

<sup>732</sup> This comes from the Syriac verb 'to buy, sell, redeem'; it may be a translation of the Arabic *shurāt*, which is a name the Kharijites use for themselves, meaning 'sellers', i.e. those who redeem their soul for loyalty to God/paradise by fighting for His cause, though it is not known that many Kharijites supported Sulayman.



so that he would become king. He arrived at 'Ayn Gara in November of the year AG 1056 (744). They engaged in battle and Sulayman was defeated and **12,000** of his men **were killed**. Sulayman escaped with his servants to Damascus. Since he feared lest he be caught and killed in it, he took with him many treasures and some 3000 slaves and went to the fort at **Rusafa**, which is the castle of Ja'bar,<sup>733</sup> in which his father Hisham used to live. He occupied it because the household and family of Hisham were there, as well as what was left of his treasures. Now when 'Abd al-'Aziz, nephew of Ibrahim, became aware that Sulayman had been defeated, he entered the gaol where the sons of Walid were imprisoned and slew them using an iron-tipped whip. Thus they were cruelly freed from their lives. However, a just punishment suddenly caught up with him. After he had killed the children he left to go to his house and to prepare himself to flee, but before he got there the residents of the city surrounded him and threw fire on it. When he sought to pass between them and get away, some of the freedmen of Walid seized him and killed him.

**(744) Marwan enters Damascus and transfers his rule to Harran**<sup>734</sup>

Theophanes: Then Marwan, too, came to Damascus; he killed many prominent men and those who had lent themselves to the murder of Walid and the latter's children, while others he maimed. He then transferred all the moneys and treasures to Harran, a city of Mesopotamia.<sup>735</sup>

Agapius: Marwan marched to Damascus and its people opened the gates to him. He entered it and the Arabs gathered and pledged allegiance to him. He camped at a place three miles from Damascus called al-'Aliya.<sup>736</sup> He

<sup>733</sup> There is a Qala'at (castle of) Ja'bar on the north bank of the Euphrates, near Raqqa in modern Syria. However, it only gained this name in the eleventh century AD, being known before that as Qala'at Dawsar (Yaqt, 'Ja'bar', 'Dawsar'), and it is quite far from Rusafa (ca. 50 km). Possibly the original reading was *ganbar* 'mighty' (though this word is not normally used of places), and the chronicler of 1234 saw this as Ja'bar (the difference in the original Syriac is minimal), thinking of the castle that would have been quite well known in his day, since it was captured by the Zankid rulers of Syro-Mesopotamia in the twelfth century AD.

<sup>734</sup> Theophanes, 419; Agapius, 514–15; Msyr 11.XXII, 464/505; *Chron* 1234, 318–19.

<sup>735</sup> Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 190 (transfer of treasury to Harran); *Chron* 819, 18 (Marwan was 'a harsh man, much feared by the Arabs; for he had some of them killed by crucifixion in all the cities of Syria'); Tabari, 2.1892 ('Marwan withdrew to his residence in Harran').

<sup>736</sup> This detail is also noted by Tabari, 2.1890; Ya'qubi, 2.403, says Dayr (the monastery of) al-'Aliya.

ordered that Yazid the Deficient be disinterred from his grave and crucified on a wooden stake.<sup>737</sup> He ordered the Qadariyya to be assembled before him and made an example of them. He cut off the arms and legs of some and others he had crucified; he ordered the killing of some and the banishment of others. Marwan ordered the royal treasures to be carried to Harran and that was done. Ibrahim came to him and took from him a guarantee of safety. As for Sulayman, he went off to the desert of Phoenicia and sought to hide out there for a time.<sup>738</sup> An Arab people in the desert called the Kalbites united with Sulayman and they journeyed to Palmyra, which is in their desert, east of Rusafa.<sup>739</sup>

MSyr: **Marwan** came to **Damascus** and assumed the rule. He carried off **the royal treasury** and that which is called *dūlbāra*,<sup>740</sup> which **he loaded onto 3000 camels** and came to **Harran**. The westerners began to complain that he did not base himself with them.

*Chron* 1234: Two days later **Marwan** arrived at **Damascus**. They opened to him the gates of the city since the sons of Walid had stipulated to them that if they were killed, then the rule should go to Marwan. For this reason, the Damascenes made Marwan king over them, on a Friday, the second of November. Marwan ordered that Yazid be taken out from his grave and crucified on a wooden stake and that the corpse of 'Abd al-'Aziz be hung on the Gabitha gate.<sup>741</sup> He cut off the hands and feet of many men. After he had stayed in Damascus a short time, he managed to **load the royal treasury onto 3000 camels** and brought them with him to the city of **Harran** and left Damascus destitute of all the trappings of kingship. Because of this, before he even got to Harran, the west was stirred up against him and established a leader for themselves, Thabit ibn Nu'aym (al-Judhami). Marwan reached Harran and set up camp in a village named Beth Botin.

**{Marwan and the Church:** MSyr: When King Marwan returned to Harran, the patriarch John prepared for him great honours. He had them loaded on to fifty camels and went to find him. Thus he was very well received.

<sup>737</sup> Cf. Ibn Khayyat, 393: 'He ordered Yazid to be disinterred and crucified.'

<sup>738</sup> Tabari, 2.1892, says he had gone to Palmyra, which would indeed count as being in the desert of Phoenicia.

<sup>739</sup> Palmyra is about 80 miles south-south-west of Rusafa.

<sup>740</sup> This appears to be a transliteration of Arabic *dhū l-bāri*, which would mean something that possessed a surpassing/excelling quality; the expression is not, however, found in Muslim sources.

<sup>741</sup> The gate facing in the direction of Gabitha (Arabic: Jabiya), south of Damascus.



The king wrote for him a document, giving him authority over all ecclesiastical affairs... (but the bishops envied him and plotted against him)... Cyriacus (bishop) of Sijistan took for himself a wicked teacher, Bar Salta of Resh'aina, and they composed a mendacious book which they called the Apocalypse of Enoch. They put in it passages which signified that Marwan would reign and his son after him. The book was presented to Marwan by one of his augurers; he read it and was delighted with it, like a child. He ordered Cyriacus to make a commentary on it and the latter interpreted it according to the desires of the king.<sup>742</sup>

**(745) A comet is seen in Syria<sup>743</sup>**

Theophanes: A great comet appeared in Syria.

Agapius: A comet appeared.

MSyr: At the beginning of January the like of stars were seen darting to and fro everywhere in the whole atmosphere, frequently and violently, as though doing battle. Also, in the middle of the sky, during the night, the likeness of a great column of fire could be seen. From the day that those shooting stars began, one could see near the Milky Way a star that looked as big as the moon. It remained for four days. Everyone said about these signs that they indicated battles, shedding of blood, plagues and chastisements.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded.

<sup>742</sup> MSyr 11.XXII, 464–65/506–7. The account continues at length describing how Cyriacus, now in favour with Marwan, got him to do various things for him in the Church.

<sup>743</sup> Theophanes, 421; Agapius, 515; MSyr 11.XXII, 465/507–508. Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 170: AH 127/AG 1056/745 (citing Daniel the Miaphysite, probably to be identified with Dionysius' grandfather; see n. 492 above). Schöve, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 294, confirms that there was a comet in January 745.

**(745) The revolt of Hims, of Thabit ibn Nu'aym and of Dahhak ibn Qays<sup>744</sup>**

Theophanes: Thabit<sup>745</sup> and Dahhak the Harurite<sup>746</sup> (Arourite) rebelled against Marwan. Marwan captured them and killed them in the territory of Hims together with 12,000 warriors. At Hims he impaled 120 Kalbites (Chalbenoi) and he killed 'Abbas in prison, a man who had shed much Christian blood and had devastated and depopulated many places. The Ethiopian who was dispatched by Marwan to carry out this task filled a bag with unslaked lime and, having approached 'Abbas,<sup>747</sup> placed it over his head and nostrils and so smothered him. Thus was contrived a just punishment for the sorcerer, for he had wrought much evil to the Christians by means of magic and the invocation of demons. He had also shared in the murder of Walid.

Agapius: In Palestine a rebel named Thabit arose, collected many troops and took control of the Syrias. Also Dahhak the Harurite rebelled at Kufa and Dayr 'Aql<sup>748</sup> and took control of most of Iraq. He set off seeking Marwan. When he was near to him he sent to him an envoy pledging allegiance and took from him a guarantee of safety. After Dahhak had given his pledge and Marwan ibn Muhammad had given a guarantee of safety regarding him, Marwan crossed the Euphrates, making for the rebel Thabit in Palestine. Thabit heard of Marwan's approach and headed out towards Tiberias. As Marwan passed by Hims, one of its residents revolted, gathered the Kalbites and took control of the city. Marwan turned upon him, captured him and killed him and all his men. He crucified them all and exiled the rest of the Kalbites of Hims and he ordered a large breach to be made in its walls.<sup>749</sup>

<sup>744</sup> Theophanes, 421; Agapius, 515–17; MSyr 11.XXII, 464–65/505; *Chron 1234*, 319–20. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1615, 1618–19 (summer AH 127/745).

<sup>745</sup> Thabit ibn Nu'aym was of the tribe of Judham, which had been important in the area of Jordan/Palestine before Islam; see *EI*, 'Djudham'; Crone, *Slaves*, 161. Cf. Ibn Khayyat, 393–94; Ya'qubi, 2.405; Tabari, 2.1894–96.

<sup>746</sup> That is, the Kharijite; see n. 375 above. This is Dahhak ibn Qays al-Shaybani (to be distinguished from Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri, who fought against Marwan I), who led a very popular revolt, winning over 'Abdallah ibn 'Umar II and Sulayman ibn Hisham; see *EI*, 'al-Dahhak b. Kays al-Shaybani'. Cf. Ibn Khayyat, 395–97; Tabari, 2.1897–1908; and see the notice on him below.

<sup>747</sup> 'Abbas ibn Walid, the same as is mentioned above.

<sup>748</sup> A town in Iraq situated on the river Tigris, ca. 80 km south-east of Baghdad; not to be confused with 'Aqla.

<sup>749</sup> Cf. Ibn Khayyat, 393; Tabari, 2.1892–94 (esp. 1893: 'Marwan ordered that all the slain of the Kalbites, some five or six hundred, be collected and crucified around the city, and he tore down about a bow shot's length of the city wall').



Thabit was making for Tiberias; its people learned of his coming and began going out every day to fight him. They killed some 10,000 of his men and plundered his possessions. Then Thabit went off with his sons and a number of his men to Sinai<sup>750</sup> and lived there as a fugitive. Marwan came to Palestine. He heard what the people of Tiberias had done with Thabit and was very happy and pleased with that. He honoured the people of Palestine and increased his aid to them. He stayed there and dispatched troops in pursuit of the rebel Thabit. They caught up with him at Mount Seir<sup>751</sup> and seized him and the men who were with him and brought him to Marwan. He ordered that Thabit's right hand and left leg be cut off. Then Marwan left Palestine and travelled to Damascus and there he killed Thabit.

MSyr: **Marwan** busied himself with **amassing gold and he made his yoke weigh heavy on the people of the land**. His troops inflicted much harm on people: beatings, pillaging and violation of women in front of their husbands. Marwan attacked Hims and, having besieged it **for four months**, took it by reason of lack of food. He demolished its **wall** and smashed it into small stones with a hammer. He also destroyed the wall of Baalbek.

*Chron 1234*: **Marwan** sought to **amass gold and he made his yoke weigh heavy on the land**. He multiplied exactions; the custodians whom he appointed to prevent corruption were themselves corrupt and rapacious; and the emirs and governors of his realm made people suffer afflictions without compassion: plundering of possessions, and shameless adultery and wantonness with women... (then God sends a plague upon Syria and Mesopotamia as punishment)...<sup>752</sup> Yet Marwan and his clan, like voracious dogs, were not satisfied and his door was shut in the face of the poor and the petitioners. Now after the revolt of Thabit, Dahhak, head of the Harurites, took control of

750 Thus Agapius, but Vasiliev emends to Multan, citing Tabari, 2.1895. However, Tabari is not speaking about Thabit at this point and *Chron 1234*, 320, makes clear that Sinai is what Agapius meant.

751 Vasiliev says that the name of the mountain range is unclear, but Seir is a plausible reading and it is in the right area, namely on the border of Egypt and Palestine (cf. Genesis 36:8, 20).

752 This notice on the plague, which cites large numbers of dead in Mesopotamia (200,000) and Bostra (20,000 per day), is also found in Msyr 11.XXII, 465–66/508, where it is placed around the time of the comet of January 745, and in *Chron Zuqnin*, 179–88 (a very long account, suggesting it was particularly severe in its author's region of Mesopotamia). The plague occurred at the same time as a famine, says Msyr, and seeing these disasters 'Marwan, king of the Arabs, who did not even admit that there was a God, himself did penitence and wrote a letter to all the empire of the Arabs that they should repent' (this same statement appears in *Chron 1234*, but in connection with the earthquake of 749 – see the notice thereon below).

all Beth Aramaye<sup>753</sup> and he went out to make war on Marwan. When winter had passed Marwan went out and left Harran. He came to Callinicum to try to draw Sulayman to his side; he sent word to him and effected a reconciliation. He (Marwan) came to him with all his freedmen and also brought with him Ibrahim, whom the Damascenes had made king over them and whom he had captured in the course of his war with Sulayman and imprisoned him in Harran until he should die. Then Marwan crossed the Euphrates and proceeded against Thabit. When Thabit became aware of the coming of Marwan, he went to besiege Tiberias. At Hims a man of Kalb, named Smbat,<sup>754</sup> revolted, gathering round him many Kalbites. Marwan came, laid siege to it and kept it in deprivation **for four months**. When they were tormented by famine, they surrendered and he seized the Kalbites. Some he crucified and some he banished. He destroyed **the wall** of the city and made breaches in it. He left it and came to the land of Arabia and stayed at Dayr Ayyub.<sup>755</sup> The residents of Tiberias, once they were aware of the coming of Marwan, took courage enough to fight with Thabit and many of his troops were killed. He fled with a few men and one of his sons to find refuge on Mount Sinai. Marwan sent a force in pursuit of him and they caught him and brought him to Marwan. He ordered that his right hand and left leg be cut off. Afterwards, having come to Damascus, Marwan had him and his son crucified on the Gabitha gate.

#### **Marwan backs Theophylact as patriarch of Antioch<sup>756</sup>**

Theophanes: At the request of the eastern Christians he allowed that Theophylact, a priest of Edessa, should be ordained patriarch of Antioch, as Stephen had died. He ordered that Theophylact should be honoured by the Arabs in public decrees, for the man was adorned with spiritual gifts, especially that of chastity.

Agapius: not recorded

753 Southern and Central Iraq.

754 Presumably the same as the al-Simt ibn Thabit al-Asbagh named by Ya'qubi, 2.404, as a Himsi rebel leader.

755 The chronicler is evidently thinking of the Roman province of Arabia. Tabari, 2.1894–95, also has Marwan stay at Dayr Ayyub, which is a settlement in the Hawran, south of Damascus.

756 Theophanes, 421; Msyr 11.XXII, 467/511. The two accounts are different (e.g. Msyr proceeds to relate at length Theophylact's dealings with the Maronites) and so may well be from different sources.



MSyr: Marwan, king of the Arabs, ordered the Chalcedonians to take as patriarch Theophylact son of Qanbara, of Harran, who was Marwan's goldsmith. He obtained from Marwan an edict and an army to persecute the Maronites. He came to the monastery of Maron and pressured them to accept the heresy of Maximus and not to say 'who was crucified for us'.<sup>757</sup>

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

**Marwan defeats Sulayman ibn Hisham a second time and kills Hisham's retinue<sup>758</sup>**

Theophanes: Sulayman gathered his armies and, after engaging Marwan once again, was defeated with the loss of 7000 men and escaped first to Palmyra, then to Persia. | Marwan killed all the relatives and freedmen of Hisham.

Agapius: Marwan journeyed from Damascus to Callinicum (Raqqa), having decided to go down to Iraq. Sulayman ibn Hisham sent an envoy to him requesting a guarantee of safety, which he granted and Sulayman came to him. When Marwan travelled to Circesium, Sulayman asked him permission to go to Rusafa and to remain there a few days. Marwan allowed that and so Sulayman went.<sup>759</sup> But when Marwan was encamped at Circesium (Qarqisiya), Sulayman ibn Hisham revolted and gathered the Arabs of the Syrias. All the Arabs who were with Marwan came over to Sulayman, who now resolved to march to Harran. When news of Sulayman's revolt and recruitment reached Marwan, he turned back from where he was heading and proceeded to Circesium. He moved from place to place, fighting as he went. Then Sulayman caught up with him and they engaged in battle; Sulayman was defeated and 7000 of his men were killed. Sulayman escaped and got to the desert of Phoenicia and went to Palmyra.<sup>760</sup> Marwan ordered

<sup>757</sup> The famous theologian Maximus the Confessor (see n. 563 above) argued that Christ had two wills (one for each of his divine and human natures), not just one; the Maronites accepted only one will. For the formula 'who was crucified for us' see n. 787 below.

<sup>758</sup> Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 517–18; *Chron 1234*, 320–21. All three give the figure of 7000.

<sup>759</sup> The detail of Sulayman asking to rest at Rusafa is given only by Agapius, but confirmed by Tabari, 2.1897, 1908.

<sup>760</sup> Corroborated by Tabari, 2.1912. This second encounter between Marwan and Sulayman is called the Battle of Khusaf in Muslim sources and is said to have taken place in the region of Qinnasrin (*ibid.*, 2.1909–13; Ya'qubi, 2.405). *Chron 1234* mentions Gabbula, and Ibn al-'Adim,

the destruction of the estates of Hisham that were on the Euphrates and in other places. Some of the freedmen of Hisham shut themselves up in a fort that he had owned, on the Euphrates opposite al-Rahba,<sup>761</sup> and began to insult and curse Marwan. He dispatched troops to them, who brought them down and cut off their heads; they were about 400 men.<sup>762</sup>

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: Sulayman ibn Hisham rebelled against Marwan with the Arabs of Phoenicia and Palestine and they hastened to march upon Harran before Marwan regained it. When Marwan heard this he returned from his journey and marched against them. He caught up with them at Gabbula.<sup>763</sup> He waged battle with Sulayman, who was overwhelmed and 7000 of the troops with him were wiped out. Sulayman got away to Palmyra in the desert. Marwan returned to Callinicum and ordered his troops to plunder the properties of Hisham, which were on the banks of the Euphrates. He captured 400 of Hisham's freedmen and cut off their hands and feet. He took two of Hisham's daughters and forcibly gave them to his sons. Then he coerced the Arabs to extend their right hands and pledge that his sons, 'Abdallah and 'Ubaydallah, reign after him. He brought with him from Damascus 500 men whom he crucified all around the walls of Harran.

**(746) The inhabitants of Hims revolt again<sup>764</sup>**

Theophanes: The inhabitants of Hims, Baalbek and Damascus raised a rebellion and shut their gates to Marwan... He himself came to Hims, which he captured after a siege of four months...<sup>765</sup> After victoriously taking

<sup>1.523</sup>, confirms this, and notes that Gabbula (Arabic: Jabbul) was one of the villages of Aleppo by the waste lands of Khusaf, by which he must mean the salt flats found south-east of modern Aleppo, called Sabkhat al-Jabbul today. See also Yaqut, 'al-Jabbul'.

<sup>761</sup> Al-Rahba just means 'a spacious / open tract of land' and is applied to lots of places fitting that description.

<sup>762</sup> Recounted also by Tabari, 2.1909–11, who calls the fort al-Kamil and says it was by the Hani canal that Hisham had had dug near Raqqa, leading to the Euphrates.

<sup>763</sup> See n. 760 above.

<sup>764</sup> Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 518–20. Dionysius just mentions one rebellion of Hims (see notice above under the year 745); this seems to be the view also of Ya'qubi, 2.404, and Ibn Khayyat, 393, but Tabari describes two rebellions, as does TC apparently (judging from Theophanes and Agapius).

<sup>765</sup> Theophanes and Dionysius (in their earlier notice about a siege at Hims) give the length



Hims, Marwan killed all the relatives and freedmen of Hisham.<sup>766</sup> He also demolished the walls of Baalbek, Damascus and Jerusalem, put to death many powerful men, and maimed those remaining in the said cities.

Agapius: The people of Hims rebelled against Marwan and killed his governor over it, 'Abdallah. They repaired the breach which Marwan had made in the citadel.<sup>767</sup> The Kalbite Arabs sided with Yazid ibn Hisham;<sup>768</sup> they came to Damascus and besieged it. The sons of Thabit (ibn Nu'aym) revolted in Palestine; they took control of it and fought anyone obedient to Marwan... Marwan left for Hims. When its people learned of his approach, they dispatched to him a man named Mu'awiya<sup>769</sup> with an army to stand against him. They took Sa'id ibn Hisham<sup>770</sup> and placed him in command over them. The sympathies of Sulayman ibn Hisham lay with them. Marwan reached Qinnasrin and heard of the approach of Mu'awiya. He marched towards him, engaged him, defeated him and killed him and all his men. Then he proceeded to Hims and besieged it in the days of spring. He sent his messengers to them, offered them guarantees, exhortations and pardons, but they refused to obey him. When he saw that, he set up siege engines and waited patiently... Marwan sent Abu l-Ward<sup>771</sup> with a large army to Palestine. He found a son of Thabit (ibn Nu'aym) there, defeated him, took him captive and brought him to Marwan while he was at Hims. When the stay of Marwan at Hims grew long and its residents refused to open it to him, he ordered his men to go out into the countryside and villages and ravage it. Seeing that, the people of Hims wrote and requested a guarantee of safety. Marwan

of the siege as four months; this fits well with Agapius' statement that the siege was begun in spring and with Waqidi's assertion (in Tabari, 2.1942) that Hims was taken in Shawwal 128 AH/July 746 (though Tabari, 2.1912, says the siege lasted ten months). The dots here, and also in Agapius, indicate material on Dahhak ibn Qays that I have collected and put together in the next notice below.

<sup>766</sup> I also cite this sentence in the previous notice, since it is relevant for Marwan's treatment of Hisham. Theophanes' notices are very compressed at this point.

<sup>767</sup> I.e., in the course of Marwan's first siege of Hims.

<sup>768</sup> A son of the caliph Hisham; often referred to as al-Afqam, 'having projecting lower teeth'; probably, though, Sulayman ibn Hisham is meant (cf. Tabari, 2.1910).

<sup>769</sup> Mu'awiya al-Saksaki; see n. 712 above. Ya'qubi, 2.405, has Marwan imprison Mu'awiya ibn 'Abdallah al-Saksaki.

<sup>770</sup> Another son of the caliph Hisham; see Tabari, 2.1912.

<sup>771</sup> His proper name was Majza'a ibn al-Kawthar and he was the grandson of the famous Zufar ibn al-Harith, a chief of the 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'a tribe, who had rebelled against 'Abd al-Malik (see n. 471 above). Abu l-Ward was a close supporter of Marwan and would later rebel against the Abbasids (Crone, *Slaves*, 109).

approved this, except as regards Sa'id ibn Hisham, whose safety he did not guarantee, and they opened the gates. Marwan ordered that the walls of Hims and Baalbek be destroyed. Then he returned to Harran and encamped there.

Dionysius: not recorded

#### (746) Marwan kills Dahhak ibn Qays the Kharijite<sup>772</sup>

Theophanes: Marwan sent his son at the head of an army against Dahhak... Dahhak for his part was marching from Persia with a great force. Marwan engaged him in Mesopotamia and, after killing many of his companions, captured him and slew him.

Agapius: Dahhak the Harurite became active in Iraq in these days; he collected many troops and sought out Marwan. When trials beset Marwan on all sides and enemies surrounded him, he dispatched his son 'Abdallah with troops to Nisibis,<sup>773</sup> because he had learned that Dahhak was heading there. And he sent troops with Yazid ibn ('Umar ibn) Hubayra<sup>774</sup> to Circesium. He spoke in a stirring manner to both of them, saying: 'If Dahhak heads this way, let one of you chase him and keep him busy and let the other go down to Iraq, seize it and take charge of it'... Dahhak the Harurite travelled at this time to Mosul. He killed Marwan's governor over it and then went to Nisibis and besieged it. Hearing of Dahhak's siege, Yazid went down to Iraq and killed all the men of Dahhak that he found there and his household and he took control of the whole of the east... Marwan set off, heading for Nisibis to engage Dahhak the Harurite. When Dahhak heard of the approach of Marwan, he left Nisibis, making straight for Marwan. Sulayman ibn Hisham had joined Dahhak. The latter arrived at Kafartuta and besieged it. Marwan reached Resh'aina and from there went to Dahhak. He engaged him between Resh'aina and Kafartuta.<sup>775</sup> Battle was joined between them and it was an

<sup>772</sup> Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 518... 519... 520; *Chron* 1234, 321–22. The ellipses reflect the fact that I have separated out the material on Dahhak ibn Qays from material on other events of this civil war. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 190–91 (AG 1058/746–47); Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1634–35; Tabari, 2.1914–15, 1938–40; Ibn Khayyat, 398–400 (AH 128/746). See Hawting, *First Dynasty*, 100–1.

<sup>773</sup> Ibn Khayyat, 399, says he held it for two months against Dahhak before his father, Marwan II, came to his aid.

<sup>774</sup> This is Yazid ibn 'Umar ibn Hubayra al-Fazari, governor of Iraq for Marwan II, son of 'Umar ibn Hubayra, who had been governor of Iraq for Yazid II. See Crone, *Slaves*, 107.

<sup>775</sup> Both cities are in Mesopotamia; Resh'aina (Arabic: Ra's al-'Ayn) is in modern north-



immense struggle for both sides. Then Dahhak and his men were defeated and Marwan pursued them until he caught up with them and killed all of them, together with Dahhak.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234:* Marwan gave a part of his army to his son 'Abdallah and sent him to Nisibis, since he had heard that Dahhak was ready to go there. The other part of his army he gave to Yazid ibn Hubayra and sent him to Circesium. He instructed them: 'If Dahhak marches towards Nisibis, Ibn Hubayra should go down to Beth Aramaye, enter 'Aqula, which is Kufa, and seize it. If, however, he comes towards Circesium, 'Abdallah should capture Kufa.' With matters thus, Dahhak the Harurite set off and came to Assyria. He captured a fort in Niniveh, killed the head of the army who was in it, called Qatiran,<sup>776</sup> and took the royal treasury that was there, in which he found 700,000 gold coins and 150,000 belonging to Qatiran. Then Dahhak set off and crossed to Mosul where he killed Bistam, head of the Bayhasites, a just and upright man.<sup>777</sup> Leaving Mosul, he came to besiege Nisibis, in which was 'Abdallah ibn Marwan. When Marwan heard that Dahhak the Harurite was besieging Nisibis and contending with his son 'Abdallah, he set off to oppose him. Dahhak, hearing of the approach of Marwan, set off, leaving Nisibis, and marched towards Marwan. Sulayman ibn Hisham was with him, for he had left Palmyra with many men of his household a few days before and come to Dahhak. So Dahhak came with Sulayman and pitched camp in the village of Tabiata,<sup>778</sup> between the city of Dara and Kafartuta. Marwan arrived and both sides met nearby and joined battle. On the first day of the battle many were killed on both sides, including Dahhak the Harurite.

east Syria, right by the border with Turkey; Kafartuta is further east, and just in modern south Turkey.

<sup>776</sup> Thus Tabari, 2.1938–39, who notes that al-Qatiran ibn Akwa was Marwan II's governor of Mosul.

<sup>777</sup> Bistam ibn Layth al-Tha'alabi; the Bayhasites, of whom he was head, were a sub-sect of the Kharijites, who can all be loosely characterised by their opposition to autocratic rule and its monopolisation by any one family. Cf. Ibn Khayyat, 402–3; Tabari, 2.1898, has Khaybari kill Bistam, rather than Dahhak.

<sup>778</sup> Not mentioned by the Muslim sources, which speak of al-Ghazz, though also placing it in the region of Kafartuta (e.g. Tabari, 2.1939–40).

**(746) Marwan kills Khaybari, the successor of Dahhak ibn Qays<sup>779</sup>**

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: After Dahhak was killed, the Harurites handed over their command to a man called Khaybari. This Khaybari disguised himself and came to the camp of Marwan; he reconnoitred it and circled it until he arrived at the tent of Marwan. Then he attacked Marwan and his men suddenly and they were defeated. Marwan almost perished except for the fact that his son 'Abdallah and a number of Arabs with him came back after the defeat and attacked the Harurites, driving them from the camp.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234:* Then the Harurites established Khaybari as their chief and on the 6th of the month of October<sup>780</sup> they joined battle again. Khaybari pushed back the army of Marwan, the part in which Marwan was positioned. So Marwan and those with him fled. Numerous troops were killed to the extent that the waters of the river Bushay were blocked by the bodies of men. Marwan himself almost perished except for the fact that his son 'Abdallah, and the army with him, came back from another side against the Harurites. He arrived to find Khaybari, who had invaded Marwan's camp, taking possession of his tents and sitting on Marwan's bed. He (Khaybari) only had 30 cavalymen with him and so 'Abdallah and his troops attacked him and killed him and those with him. Marwan returned to his camp after his son's victory.

Cf. Tabari, 2.1940–41: When Dahhak was killed, the people in his camp went and gave their oath of allegiance to Khaybari... Khaybari attacked Marwan with about 400 Kharijite cavalymen and defeated Marwan's men, with him in the midst of them. Marwan fled his encampment and Khaybari entered it with his followers... They came to Marwan's own tent, cut its ropes and Khaybari sat upon Marwan's own bed.<sup>781</sup> Marwan's right wing, commanded by his son 'Abdallah, had held its position, as also had his left wing, commanded by Ishaq ibn Muslim al-'Uqayli. When the people of Marwan's camp saw how few were accompanying Khaybari, some slaves from the camp assaulted him with tent poles and killed him and all of his

<sup>779</sup> Agapius, 520; *Chron 1234*, 322. Khaybari's full name was Sa'id ibn Bahdal.

<sup>780</sup> In 746, at the beginning of AH 129.

<sup>781</sup> *Jalasa 'alā farshihil* 'sat upon his bed', which corresponds well to *Chron 1234*, 322: *yṯib 'al teshwūteh*; cf. Ibn Khayyat, 400: *qa'ada 'alā sarīrihi*.



companions in Marwan's tent and in the area round it. The news reached Marwan when he had fled five or six miles from the camp. At this he returned to his camp, ordered his cavalry back from their places and stations, and spent that night in his camp.<sup>782</sup>

#### King Constantine raids Syria<sup>783</sup>

Theophanes: Constantine invaded Syria and Duluk<sup>784</sup> (Douluchia) and captured Germaniceia,<sup>785</sup> taking advantage of the internecine war among the Arabs. The Arabs who lived in those parts he sent off unarmed under a verbal assurance. He took along his maternal relatives<sup>786</sup> and transferred them to Byzantium together with many Syrians – Miaphysite heretics, most of whom have continued to live in Thrace to this very day and crucify the Trinity in the *trisagion* in the manner of Peter the Fuller.<sup>787</sup>

Agapius: While people were (mired) in this misfortune (i.e. the civil war), the king of the Romans raided the Syrias and got as far as Duluk. When he heard that Marwan had captured Hims he feared that Marwan would turn on him and so he returned to Constantinople with many captives.

Dionysius: not recorded

782 There is little direct correspondence in wording (though see previous note), but there is remarkable similarity in the structure and details of the accounts of TC and Tabari (Ibn Khayyat, 400, gives a very similar account).

783 Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 519 (*Dlwk*).

784 *Dlwk*: ancient Doliche, modern Dülük, near modern Gaziantep, in south central Turkey.

785 Syriac and Arabic: Mar'ash; thus also in Turkish, but in 1973 it gained the epithet 'hero', so Kahraman-maraş, which is in modern south central Turkey, ca. 80 km north-west of Gaziantep.

786 Constantine's father Leo was a native of Germaniceia and so presumably had relatives there.

787 Peter the Fuller was patriarch of Antioch (471–88) and an opponent of the council of Chalcedon; he added to the liturgical hymn known as the *trisagion* the words 'who was crucified for us', implying that the divine nature suffered on the cross. Both pieces of information suggest a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §67.

#### The sky darkens for five days<sup>788</sup>

Theophanes: From 10–15 August there was a misty darkness.

Agapius: There was an intense darkness for five days in August. The atmosphere was turbid and opaque. The sun was like blood and its light weak. However, it was not an eclipse, but turbidity of the atmosphere.

Dionysius: not recorded

#### (746–47) The Harurites fight Marwan under their new leader Shayban<sup>789</sup>

Theophanes: Gregory<sup>790</sup> was killed by the Harurites and Marwan, the Arab leader, was victorious, as I have already said.

Agapius: The Harurites reassembled and handed over their command to a man named Shayban.<sup>791</sup> He rallied an army and travelled to Nineveh. Marwan marched towards him and encamped near him. War was launched between them, proceeding slowly and lasting for two months.<sup>792</sup> Then Marwan's men made an assault against the Harurites and defeated them, pursuing them as far as Azerbaijan. Marwan dispatched 'Amir ibn Dubara with many troops to hunt down the Harurites<sup>793</sup> while he returned to Harran, seeking refuge and respite, and stayed there.<sup>794</sup>

MSyr: Marwan went down to Assyria, to the place called Niniveh.

*Chron 1234*: The Harurites established as leader for themselves a man

788 Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 520.

789 Theophanes, 424; Agapius, 521; MSyr 11.XXII, 465/505 (only an allusion); *Chron 1234*, 322–23. Cf. Tabari, 2.1943–49; Ibn Khayyat, 401, 408–9. The skirmishes between the two parties around Niniveh / Mosul are said to have taken place in AH 129, which corresponds to 21 September 746–10 September 747.

790 Identity unknown. After this notice Theophanes diverges substantially from TC, both omitting material found in TC and adducing material not found in TC; Theophanes either has access to an additional source or is using a continuation of TC (or of the 'eastern source'; see introduction above) that adduces additional material; see Appendix 1 below.

791 His full name was Shayban ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Yashkuri, and he bore the nickname Abu l-Dulfa'.

792 *Chron 1234* gives eight months, and Tabari, 2.1944, six months.

793 Cf. Tabari, 2.1945: 'Marwan wrote to Ibn Dubara to pursue the Kharijites and not to stop until he had annihilated them.' On 'Amir ibn Dubara al-Murri see Crone, *Slaves*, 164–65.

794 Tabari, 2.1946, says he stayed there until his final battle at the river Zab, on which see below.



called Shayban. He left there and went to Mosul. Marwan followed them. The Harurites travelled along without doing any harm to anyone whereas the party of Marwan visited many evils without pity as they passed. The Harurites crossed the Tigris and Marwan encamped in the region of **Niniveh**. Each side dug a ditch and fortified its camp. The army of Marwan amounted to 150,000 while the Harurites were barely 10,000 and yet they put up fierce resistance to Marwan's men. After the fighting had gone on for eight months the Harurite side weakened and left: some went towards Media and the rest dispersed to various places. Marwan returned to Harran. Ibrahim, the brother of the tyrant Yazid, was in the prison of Harran at that time, the one who, as we said above, ruled for a short time at Damascus and then was captured in battle by Marwan and taken to Harran.

**(747) Abu Muslim and the beginning of the Abbasid revolt**<sup>795</sup>

Theophanes: A people called the Khurasani (Chorasanite) wearers-of-black (Maurophoroi)<sup>796</sup> rose up in the eastern part of Persia against Marwan and the entire clan that had ruled from the time of Muhammad, the false prophet, down to that same Marwan, that is, the so-called progeny of Umayya (Oumaia). For while the latter were busy fighting one another after the murder of Walid, the sons of Hashim (Echim) and of 'Ali (Alim), as they are called, who were likewise related to the same prophet, but were fugitives and lived in hiding in Lesser Arabia,<sup>797</sup> gathered together under the leadership of Ibrahim.<sup>798</sup> They dispatched a certain freedman of theirs

<sup>795</sup> Theophanes, 424; Agapius, 521–22; *Chron* 1234, 323–24. Ibn Khayyat, 409, gives the very specific date of Ramadan 129/May–June 747; the traditional date of the start of the revolution is Shawwal 129/June 747, when the Abbasid imam Ibrahim ibn Muhammad gave the order for the black banners of the insurgency to be raised in public in Khurasan. Note that in Muslim sources, too, the notice about the beginning of Abu Muslim's preaching follows the defeat of Shayban the Harurite (Tabari, 2.1949; Ibn Khayyat, 409), and in general TC and Tabari present much the same topics in pretty much the same order for the events of the third Arab civil war/the Abbasid revolution.

<sup>796</sup> This was the hallmark of the Abbasid revolutionaries.

<sup>797</sup> In Humayma to be precise, in modern south Jordan. Hashim ibn 'Abd Manaf, the great-grandfather of the prophet Muhammad, was the common ancestor of the Abbasids (the descendants of the prophet Muhammad's uncle, 'Abbas) and the 'Alids (the descendants of 'Ali). It was only the Abbasid family that based themselves in Humayma; the 'Alids were more scattered, though tended to be based in Kufa.

<sup>798</sup> Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali, Abbasid imam after the death of his father in 125/742–43; see *El*, 'Ibrahim b. Muhammad'.

named Abu Muslim<sup>799</sup> (Aboumouslim) to some of the prominent men of Khurasan asking for armed help against Marwan.

Agapius: People remained afflicted by these troubles and wars until there rose up in Kufa and Dayr 'Aqul a man named Abu Muslim. He took people aside and turned their opinion over to his and they accepted his call. He and his supporters wore black. There were with him fourteen men of the *shi'a*,<sup>800</sup> who displayed asceticism, abstinence and solidarity with the family of Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah,<sup>801</sup> who was at the origin of the Arabs' assumption of power, and they let their hair grow long. Many of the army of Khurasan united with them and they became a powerful party. When their position had strengthened somewhat, the people pledged allegiance to Ibrahim ibn Muhammad [...].

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron* 1234: Abu Muslim was a weaver by trade, though some say he was a freedman of the elders of Abu Ja'far<sup>802</sup> and others say he was one of the manumitted slaves of Muslim.<sup>803</sup> He was a resident of the city of Amida, where he lived and practised his profession. After the murder of King Walid (II) he sold his business and the tools of his trade and bought himself a donkey. He mounted it and came to Ibrahim at Harran, to the prison in which was Ibrahim. There Abu Muslim made an agreement with Ibrahim, who was of the family and clan of Muhammad.<sup>804</sup> When he entered his presence and Ibrahim saw that Abu Muslim was well suited to accomplish his will, he sent him to the land of Khurasan and instructed him how to behave in regard to those things that were about to be done. When he arrived in the land of Khurasan, he drew many into his way of thinking and revealed his secret to fourteen men. He and these fourteen men wore black. They grew their hair and prepared to take revenge on behalf of the descendants of

<sup>799</sup> A key architect of the Abbasid revolution, though of uncertain origins; see *El*, 'Abu Muslim', and Lassner, 'Abu Muslim'.

<sup>800</sup> *Shi'a* just means 'party, following'; often it means 'the party of 'Ali' (hence the modern term 'Shi'ite'), but here one should probably understand *shi'at Bani 'Abbas*, i.e., 'the party of the Abbasids'. Note that Tabari, 3.34, also gives the figure of fourteen men, though most Muslim sources mention twelve men.

<sup>801</sup> That is, the prophet Muhammad, who was the son of 'Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib.

<sup>802</sup> That is, the second Abbasid caliph, Mansur.

<sup>803</sup> Muslim is a common personal name; it is unclear who is meant here.

<sup>804</sup> Ibrahim ibn Muhammad was captured by Marwan and imprisoned at Harran, but only in AH 132/749–50 according to Tabari, 3.25–26. *Chron* 1234's narrative here diverges somewhat from that given in the extant Muslim sources.



Muhammad. So far all had been done in secret, for none were initiated in the secret except for these fourteen men. From then until today<sup>805</sup> they grow their hair and spread it over their shoulders, (both) the Khurasanians and the Persians, who were going out to the region of the west to fight their enemies, the Arabs. They were called *gāzīn*, that is, fighters on behalf of the true faith.<sup>806</sup> They grew in strength and many of the residents of Khurasan came to them. They became a huge group and killed all the Arabs who were found in that province.<sup>807</sup>

**(749) The easterners defeat Ibn Dubara and Ibn Hubayra<sup>808</sup>**

Theophanes: These ('the prominent men of Khurasan') banded together round a certain Qahtaba<sup>809</sup> (Chaktaban) and, after taking counsel, incited slaves against their own masters and made great slaughter in one night; equipped with their victims' arms, horses and money they became powerful. They were divided into two tribes, the Qaysites (Kaisinoi) and the Yamanites (Imanites).<sup>810</sup> Judging the Yamanites to be the stronger, Abu Muslim incited them against the Qaysites and, after killing the latter, came to Persia together with Qahtaba. He made war on Ibn Dubara (Ibindara) and captured all of his men, some 100,000 of them. He then moved against Ibn Hubayra (Ibinoubeira), who was encamped with 200,000 men and undid him also.

Agapius: Before a day had passed, they (Abu Muslim's supporters) came to the camp at Harran and killed many notables of the Arabs and of the

<sup>805</sup> This implies that the source was writing in the early Abbasid period; it could be Dionysius of Telmahre, who was writing *ca.* 817, though it could also be Theophilus of Edessa, writing in the 750s.

<sup>806</sup> Presumably from the Arabic *ghazā*, 'to raid'.

<sup>807</sup> This refers to the imperial (Syrian, Arabic-speaking) troops stationed in Khurasan, who were rotated regularly (and therefore were seen as foreigners and agents of the Umayyad government), not the local frontier troops, who were descendants of Arab troops settled there in the seventh century, but who had mostly gone native (so spoke Persian, had Persian wives, dressed in Persian attire, etc.).

<sup>808</sup> Theophanes, 424–25; Agapius, 522–23; Msyr 11.XXII, 465/505 (only an allusion and misapplied to Marwan); *Chron* 1234, 324.

<sup>809</sup> Qahtaba ibn Shabib al-Ta'i, a leading general of the Abbasid revolution; see *EI*, 'Qahtaba b. Shabib', and Agha, *Revolution*, 368.

<sup>810</sup> The various tribes of the Arabs were, by the early eighth century, loosely aligned into the two major factions of Qaysites and Yamanites, northerners and southerners (see most recently Crone, 'Qays and Yaman'). Theophanes is not very clear here, probably because he is heavily abbreviating his source.

Khurasanis. The news reached Marwan and he was overcome with grief. He wrote to 'Amir ibn Dubara, who was at that time in Iraq, ordering him to go and fight him. Abu Muslim conquered Jurjan, Rayy, Qarmisin<sup>811</sup> and all the cities of Khurasan. He took the oath of allegiance from their people on behalf of Ibrahim ibn Muhammad. 'Amir ibn Dubara marched towards him and encountered him at Isfahan.<sup>812</sup> The army of Khurasan defeated him and killed him and his men. Yazid ibn ('Umar ibn) Hubayra was governor for Marwan ibn Muhammad over the whole of the east and so when 'Amir ibn Dubara was killed he mustered the troops of Iraq and pitched camp near Ctesiphon (Mada'in). When Abu Muslim saw him he engaged them and Yazid fled from the presence of Abu Muslim and encamped in Mesopotamia, I mean between the Euphrates and the Tigris.<sup>813</sup> Abu Muslim of Khurasan marched to him and again Yazid fled; he entered Wasit and shut himself in there. Abu Muslim plundered his camp and goods, but Yazid ibn ('Umar ibn) Hubayra had already got ready at Wasit all the money and possessions<sup>814</sup> that were useful for him.

MSyr: (He went) to the region of Parthia which is called Isfahan.

*Chron* 1234: When Marwan heard about them, he quaked with fear and sent word to 'Amir ibn Dubara, who was head of the land of Fars, that he go out and confront them. 'Amir came out to the Pazgaye<sup>815</sup> and encountered them in the region of Parthia that in our days is named Isfahan and joined battle with them. 'Amir's men weakened before the others and 'Amir himself was killed along with many of his troops. The Pazgaye took control of his camp. At that time the head of the east was Yazid (ibn 'Umar) ibn Hubayra and so

<sup>811</sup> Jurjan was a province on the south-east side of the Caspian Sea, in modern northern Iran; Rayy now lies in the suburbs of modern Tehran; Qarmisin is modern Kermanshah, in western Iran, near the border with Iraq.

<sup>812</sup> This refers to what the Muslim sources call the Battle of Jabalq, in the district of Isfahan, in Rajab 131/March 749. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1680–81; Tabari, 3.4–6; Ibn Khayyat, 418–19. See Sharon, *Revolt*, 199–200.

<sup>813</sup> In the Muslim sources it is Qahtaba, not Abu Muslim, who fights Yazid ibn 'Umar ibn Hubayra, in southern Iraq in Muharram 132/August 749 (Tabari, 3.11–18; Ibn Khayyat, 422–23). In the course of the encounter Yazid is defeated (but escapes to Wasit) and Qahtaba is killed.

<sup>814</sup> Reading *amlāk* rather than *atrāk* (Turks); even if this is not the right word, something like this must be meant, as can be seen from *Chron* 1234.

<sup>815</sup> *Pazgā* means, in Syriac, 'an uneven number', and occasionally 'an even number'. There is a verb from this, *pazgī*, and it may be that the sense of *pazgāyē* is 'those who make even', i.e. who remove the inequalities in society. If so, this would suggest an interesting social dimension to the Abbasid revolution.



the Pazgaye marched against him. Ibn Hubayra gathered a large army and went out heading for the east from Ctesiphon. When the Pazgaye came, he fled before them to between the Tigris.<sup>816</sup> The Pazgaye caught up with him, but he wilted before them, fled and took refuge in Wasit, because it was fortified and in it was collected the things necessary for an army. The Pazgaye, after the flight of Yazid, plundered his camp and took from it much money.

**(749) A severe earthquake in Syria, Jordan and Palestine<sup>817</sup>**

Theophanes: There was a great earthquake in Palestine, by the Jordan and in all of Syria on 18 January, in the fourth hour. Numberless multitudes perished, churches and monasteries collapsed, especially those in the desert of the Holy City. There was an earthquake and terrible destruction in Syria, as a result of which some cities were entirely destroyed, others partially so, while some slid down entire, with their walls and houses, from positions on mountains to low-lying plains, a distance of six miles or thereabout. Eyewitnesses affirmed that in Mesopotamia the ground was split along two miles and that out of the chasm was thrown up a different soil, very white and sandy, in the midst of which, they said, there came up an animal like a mule, quite spotless, that spoke in a human voice and announced the incursion of a certain nation from the desert against the Arabs, which indeed came to pass.

Agapius: There was a violent earthquake in January on the sea coast of Palestine. Many places collapsed there and many people perished in them, especially at Tiberias, where 100,000 people or so were lost.

Dionysius:<sup>818</sup> In the year 1060 of the Greeks and 134 of the Arabs<sup>819</sup> disorder gripped the world not only in affairs of the civil sphere, but also those of

<sup>816</sup> Comparing with Agapius above, one can see this should read 'to Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and Tigris'.

<sup>817</sup> Theophanes, 422 l 426; Agapius, 521; Msyr 11.XXII, 466–67/508–10; *Chron 1234*, 325–28. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 191 (AG 1059); Elias of Nisibis, 171–72 (AH 131 = 748–49; AG 1059 = 747–48), citing Daniel the Miaphysite (see n. 743 above). Theophanes has two notices about earthquakes, both occurring in January, but it makes more sense to assume that he has two different sources for the same event, which he assigns to different years, rather than that there were two very major earthquakes occurring in the same month only two years apart. For the date of this earthquake see Tsafir and Foerster, 'The dating of the earthquake of 749 CE'.

<sup>818</sup> Since this is a very long account, with a lot of material common to both Msyr and *Chron 1234* (highlighted in bold), I do not give each version separately, but present them as one narrative with the extra phrases, principally from *Chron 1234*, indicated within brackets.

<sup>819</sup> An incorrect synchronisation: AG 1060 = 748–49; 134 AH = 751–52.

the church, as we have recounted and written in our book on ecclesiastical matters. I mean the schisms and confrontations that took place in the time of the patriarch John and Athanasius Sandalaya, the arguments and fights with which the church was filled, and the way in which creation itself acknowledged these events and proclaimed God's anger towards mankind. I shall now, therefore, speak of those things which happened in the west at this time: of earthquakes and submersions, of fires and death in many forms, of the removal of villages and forts from their places, of springs the waters of which are mutated, of the shifting of rivers and water sources and other calamities which a mind is incapable of describing, such that **Marwan, king of the Arabs, who did not even believe in God**, when he heard these things and saw them with his own eyes, he was shaken and terrified, and wrote a letter of penitence and admonition to all regions of the kingdom of the Arabs that all should give up the evil they were doing and beseech God with remorse and tears to constrain and withhold these chastisements from the world.<sup>820</sup>

**There was at Damascus** (*Chron 1234*: and the whole of its region) **an earthquake which lasted for days and which shook the city** (*Chron 1234*: and made it quiver / MSyr: like leaves on trees). **At Beth Qubayeh there was a palace built by Hajjaj ibn Yusuf,<sup>821</sup> on which he had lavished much** (*Chron 1234*: care and) **expense; it collapsed from top to bottom and more than** (MSyr: 80 / *Chron 1234*: 800) **persons were** (MSyr: suffocated / *Chron 1234*: fell and were buried) **in it. In the city itself many perished. In the Ghuta and Darayya<sup>822</sup> innumerable people died in this earthquake. Bostra, Nawa** (MSyr: and Adraa) **were entirely swallowed up.**<sup>823</sup> **At Baalbek** (*Chron 1234*: much of it collapsed and) **the sources of water became as though blood were in them;** (MSyr: after the penitence of its inhabitants and frequent prayers it returned to its usual colour). **In the sea there was an extraordinary** (*Chron 1234*: and unusual) **storm such that its waves**

<sup>820</sup> This paragraph is only from *Chron 1234* where it serves as a kind of foreword to the account of the earthquake. It is not in Msyr, except for the point about Marwan writing a letter, which, though the wording is almost the same, is linked by Msyr to a plague and famine (see n. 752 above), not to this earthquake.

<sup>821</sup> Muslim sources know of a place called the palace (*qasr*) of Hajjaj, that was just outside Damascus, in view of the Jabiya gate (e.g. Dhahabi, 9.286; Yaqut, 'Qasr Hajjaj'), but this may not be what is meant.

<sup>822</sup> The Ghuta is the agricultural land surrounding Damascus; Darayya was a small village some 5 miles south of Damascus (now it is a suburb in south Damascus).

<sup>823</sup> Bostra, Nawa and Adraa (modern Der'a) are all towns in modern south Syria, near the border with Jordan.



reached (*Chron 1234*: so it seemed) to the sky and its foam boiled like a cauldron on the fire, making a terrifying and fearful noise. It gushed forth and surpassed its usual limits, destroying many (MSyr: cities and) villages on the coast. (*Chron 1234*: Many other things are narrated which, if recorded, would make much work for their writer and the reader.) In the region of the Balqa', that is, Moab, there was a palace situated on the sea,<sup>824</sup> inhabited by Yemeni Arabs, which was struck by the waves of the sea, uprooted from its foundations and flung three miles away.

This earthquake destroyed the city of Tiberias, except for the villa of a man named 'Isa Galba. It knocked down thirty synagogues of the Jews and some wonderful natural sites there. The baths, a fine structure erected by Solomon (MSyr: son of David / *Chron 1234*: the King), collapsed and fell down. There was there a healing spring (*Chron 1234*: given by God for the health of men), above which marvellous buildings had been erected and all around it was everything necessary<sup>825</sup> for the use of those who came in search of a (MSyr: cure / *Chron 1234*: purge). (*Chron 1234*: They say that) placed there were earthen jugs skilfully arranged, on each one of which was written how many times it flushed the stomach of the one who drank it. Thus each person chose a jug according to how much he desired (*Chron 1234*: to be purged). All those buildings have now been (*Chron 1234*: destroyed and) expunged. Near Mount Tabor<sup>826</sup> a village was moved (*Chron 1234*: and transported) four miles, along with its houses and contents, without a stone or a piece of plaster falling from its buildings and without a man or beast dying, not even a hen.

The spring of water next to Jericho, the one on which were built palaces,<sup>827</sup> gardens and mills by Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Malik, remained in place, but the river from which it arose was transported and moved six miles

824 Moab was the territory on the eastern side of the Dead Sea; the Balqa' corresponded to modern north and central west Jordan and had Amman as its capital. Thus the northernmost portion of the Dead Sea is probably meant here, unless Moab is being used in a general way to refer to the east side of the Jordan, and then the Sea of Tiberias (Lake Galilee) could possibly be meant.

825 *Chron 1234* has 'n'ngy', plausibly representing Greek *anagkē* 'need' (the Latin translation has *latrinae*); MSyr has *ngy* 'behind which lies, says Chabot, the Greek *pandokeia* guesthouse.

826 In the Galilee, northern Palestine, south-west of Tiberias; the site of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

827 *Hesnē*; see n. 112 above. The clear attribution of these buildings at Jericho to Sulayman may mean that the construction of Khirbat al-Mafjar, an Umayyad palace at Jericho, usually attributed to the caliph Hisham or his nephew Walid II, should perhaps be placed earlier. See *EI*, 'Khirbat al-Mafjar'.

away from its place where it had been flowing. All the structures which Sulayman had erected on this river were thus destroyed. At Mabbug there was destruction everywhere and many people perished as a result of it. At its church, at the time of the sacrifice of our Lord, while the priest was standing with his hands held over the offering, suddenly perdition struck them; it (the church) fell down and they were unable to get out of the holy building and all who were in it were trampled and destroyed, priests as well as lay people. Instead of hymns and spiritual psalms, sighs and lamentations were heard throughout the city. Also the walls collapsed down to their foundations. When these things had come to pass, and even greater things, men still did not refrain from wicked and impious deeds. The affairs of the church were particularly troubled at this time. For this reason people were crushed by much affliction: heavy taxes, poor harvests, wars and shedding of blood in all regions.<sup>828</sup>

#### The accession of Abu l-'Abbas<sup>829</sup>

Theophanes: The rest of them (the wearers-of-black) gathered in Samaria and Trachonitis<sup>830</sup> and awarded their leadership by lot to Abu l-'Abbas<sup>831</sup> (Aboulabas), and next to him to his brother 'Abdallah<sup>832</sup> (Abdela), and next to the latter to 'Isa ibn Musa<sup>833</sup> (Ise Ibinmouse). They appointed 'Abdallah

828 For this paragraph I only give the version of *Chron 1234*, since MSyr is extremely brief, just noting that: 'The spring of water next to Jericho was moved from its place six miles. At Mabbug, at the time of the offering, it (the church) fell down, and people were killed, and cattle, for great churches and walls collapsed. At Constantinople the statues of the kings fell and many buildings; the same was true of Nicaea and other cities.'

829 Theophanes, 425; Agapius, 523/526; *Chron 1234*, 324–25. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1695–96 (autumn AH 132/749).

830 Samaria was in northern Palestine (the northern half of the modern Palestinian West Bank); Trachonitis refers to the lava lands to the south of Damascus (in the north of the Roman province of Arabia).

831 Abu l-'Abbas' personal name was 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad and his regnal title was al-Saffah; he was the first Abbasid caliph and reigned 132–136/749–754; see *EI*, 'Abu l-'Abbas al-Saffah'. Note that we have again here the practice of casting lots to pick a ruler that we saw in the second Arab civil war; see n. 465 above.

832 He bore the same personal name as his brother, 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad, but was known as Abu Ja'far and took the regnal title of Mansur; he reigned 136–158/754–775. See *EI*, 'Mansur, Abu Ja'far'.

833 He was the nephew of the previous two figures; he was governor of Kufa for both of them, but never ascended to the rule himself. See *EI*, 'Isa b. Musa b. Muhammad'.



son of 'Ali,<sup>834</sup> brother of Salih<sup>835</sup> (Salim), to be commander in Syria and Salih himself to be commander in Egypt, while 'Abdallah (Mansur), brother of Abu l-'Abbas, from whom he received the nomination to the command, they appointed over Mesopotamia. Abu l-'Abbas himself, who was in supreme authority, established his seat in Persia, the government and all the seized treasure which Marwan had carried away having been transferred to him and his Persian allies from Damascus.

Agapius: Then Abu Muslim travelled to Dayr 'Aqul and found there a man from his mission<sup>836</sup> and consulted him about what he should do. People of the family of Ibrahim ibn Muhammad were residing in Kufa<sup>837</sup> at that time. Marwan had sent someone to capture Ibrahim and then he imprisoned him in Harran, while the rest of his brothers fled. Ibrahim died in captivity after making a will in favour of his brother 'Abdallah, known as Abu l-'Abbas.<sup>838</sup> Abu Muslim headed for where 'Abdallah (Abu l-'Abbas) was hiding, brought him out and he and all the Khurasani commanders with him made him their king. l 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali and his men went to the camp of Marwan and took the riches, arms and other things that were in it and bore them to 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad in Kufa. The Arabs of Syria and Mesopotamia, once Marwan ibn Muhammad had fled, took the oath of allegiance (to Abu l-'Abbas) at the hands of 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, as also did the non-Arabs of Mesopotamia.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: They came to 'Aqula, which is Kufa. There a man was pointed out to them whose name was Abu Salama,<sup>839</sup> of the same doctrine as Abu Muslim, and they took counsel with him as to what they should do. At this time Ibrahim died, the one who was imprisoned in Harran and who was

834 Uncle of the first two Abbasid caliphs and a very senior Abbasid figure. See *EI*, 'Abdallah b. 'Ali'.

835 Another uncle of the first two Abbasid caliphs and a very senior Abbasid figure. See *EI*, 'Salih b. 'Ali'.

836 Presumably a reference to Abu Salama, who is named by *Chron 1234* and who was head of the Abbasid mission in Kufa. See *EI*, 'Abu Salama Hafs b. Sulayman'.

837 One should simply read here *hum bi-l-Kufa* (i.e. they were in Kufa), not, as Vasiliev does, *hamma bi-l-Kufa* (which he translates as 'inquiétude à Koufah').

838 Ibrahim ibn Muhammad's capture and death in prison is also reported by Tabari, 3.25–27, 41–44. Note that the claim in the next but one sentence that Abu Muslim brought out Abu l-'Abbas and proclaimed him caliph is probably not true, as Abu Muslim was in Kufa at that time. Muslim sources attribute this action to Khurasani commanders alone.

839 See n. 836 above.

brother of the tyrants 'Abbas and Yazid.<sup>840</sup> The relatives of Ibrahim, who was imprisoned at Harran, were all gathered at 'Aqula, for when Ibrahim was captured they fled and went to that place. When Ibrahim died in prison in Harran, he made a testament<sup>841</sup> in which he gave a command to his relatives in favour of 'Abdallah, his uterine brother, who was nicknamed Abu l-'Abbas. This man was at that time at Kufa. The Khurasanis came with Abu Muslim and took Abu l-'Abbas and accepted him as the first caliph of the Abbasids at Baghdad. They took him from where he came and made him king over them.

#### (750) The defeat of Marwan at the battle of the Zab<sup>842</sup>

Theophanes: Then, at the river Zab, he (Abu Muslim) overtook Marwan, who had 300,000 men, made war on him and slew an infinite multitude. One could see then one man chasing a thousand and two men driving ten thousand, as Scripture says.<sup>843</sup> When Marwan had observed that these men were winning signal victories, he went to Harran and, after crossing the river, cut the bridge, which was made of boats.<sup>844</sup>

Agapius: Once 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad (Abu l-'Abbas) was seated on the throne he dispatched a man known as Abu 'Awn<sup>845</sup> with the Khurasani troops to Mosul and he dispatched Hasan ibn Qahtaba<sup>846</sup> with troops to Yazid ibn ('Umar ibn) Hubayra at Wasit. The news reached Marwan and he sent his son 'Abdallah with many troops to Mosul and he sent his other

840 The brother of 'Abbas and Yazid was Ibrahim ibn Walid, whereas the leader of the Abbasids was Ibrahim ibn Muhammad.

841 Using the Greek word *diathēkē*.

842 Theophanes, 425; Agapius, 523–26 | 526; MSyr 11.XXII, 465/505–6; *Chron 1234*, 325 | 328–30. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 194; Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1698–99 (Jumada II 132/January 750); Tabari, 3.38–42 (Battle of the Zab), 45 (flight of Marwan to Harran).

843 Deuteronomy 32:30. Note that Theophanes makes Abu Muslim, the architect of the Abbasid revolution, into the key opponent of Marwan, but Abu Muslim did not himself participate in the battle of the Zab.

844 That is, a floating bridge supported by pontoons (flat-bottomed boats or other such floating devices).

845 His full name was 'Abd al-Malik ibn Yazid, a freedman of the tribe of Azd and a prominent participant in the Abbasid revolution. See Crone, *Slaves*, 174; *EI*, 'Abu 'Awn' (especially the entry in the third edition by Elad).

846 Son of the famous general Qahtaba ibn Shabib (see n. 809 above) and an important Abbasid general in his own right.



son, 'Ubaydallah, to Circesium. Abu l-'Abbas also sent his brother, who was older than him, to Wasit on the heels of Ibn Qahtaba and put him in charge of those armies and ordered him to take the oath of allegiance from them. He sent 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, his uncle, to Mosul on the heels of Abu 'Awn<sup>847</sup> and put him in charge of matters there and directed him to take the oath of allegiance from those in the camp, from the westerners<sup>848</sup> and the others. 'Abdallah Mansur came to Wasit and found Hasan ibn Qahtaba besieging it, but desisting from battle. He ordered that they ready for battle; the two sides moved into position and the battle between them was begun, lasting a few days. Marwan ibn Muhammad assembled the troops of Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia and set off for Mosul. 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali arrived with the troops of Khurasan and encamped on the great Euphrates, by Mosul. 'Abdallah ibn Marwan came and encamped there too, on the western side, facing 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali. They did not move to war, but waited for the arrival of Marwan.

When Marwan got there, he wrote to his son telling him to cross the river Zab and to encamp on its eastern side and to make a trench around his camp. 'Abdallah did this, making a bridge over the Zab and preparing his men for war and bringing forward the cavalry and infantry. When the two sides encountered each other, Marwan found the Khurasanis to be heroes, not wavering in battle, like a wall of stone, unaffected by iron or fire, possessing courage and fortitude. The battle went on between them and every day God alone knows how many men were killed on both sides until the strength and resolve of Marwan's men weakened, whereas the Khurasanis held firm and strove for victory. The Syrians felt impotent and the Khurasanis launched an assault against them that led them to ruin and destruction. They took to flight, stampeding on to the bridge; some piled on others and many fell into the Euphrates, where they drowned. Some of them died, trampled in the crush, and the rest perished either in battle or in captivity...<sup>849</sup> When 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali had achieved victory and Marwan and his men had been ruined and destroyed, Marwan and his son 'Abdallah fled to Harran. The battle on the Euphrates between 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali and Marwan ibn Muhammad took place on a Saturday, 22 January, in the year

847 Agapius mistakenly writes Ibn Abi 'Awn here, though elsewhere he correctly calls him Abu 'Awn.

848 *Min al-maghrib*; though it perhaps makes more sense to read *min al-'arab* 'from the Arabs'.

849 Here Agapius interpolates the comment, cited below (and in the introduction above), that in writing his history he has made use of the work of Theophilus of Edessa.

132 of the Arabs.<sup>850</sup> On this day the rule passed from the sons of Umayya to the sons of Hashim and Abu l-'Abbas 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad became king and his brother Mansur after him.

MSyr: 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, with a large army of Khurasanis, encamped on the bank of the river that is in Assyria. (Marwan arrived and engaged with the army of Abu l-'Abbas and was defeated).<sup>851</sup> They set about pillaging and **it is said that 700 loads of gold and silver coins were packed** onto camels. Marwan, his son and his brother-in-law returned in disarray to Harran, which he had made his capital.

*Chron 1234*: Once he (Abu l-'Abbas) had assumed power he sent a part of the Khurasani army with a man whose name was Abu 'Awn towards Assyria and another part with Hasan ibn Qahtaba, dispatching him to Wasit to fight Yazid ibn ('Umar ibn) Hubayra. When Marwan heard this, he sent his son 'Abdallah towards Assyria to confront the Khurasanis and he sent his other son, 'Ubaydallah, with troops to go to Circesium... (notices on the birth of a son to King Constantine and a great earthquake). l 'Abdallah Abu l-'Abbas, who had been appointed king at Kufa by the Khurasanis, sent his brother 'Abdallah (Mansur), who was older than him and who was nicknamed Abu Ja'far, to the Khurasanis who were with Hasan so that they would come to an agreement with him and he would be chief over them. He also sent his uncle 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali to Abu 'Awn and the Khurasanis who were with him so that they would come to an agreement with him and he would be chief over them. Abu Ja'far set off to Wasit and found Hasan ibn Qahtaba besieging it. Abu Ja'far ordered that they intensify the war on Wasit and the battle went on for a time. Meanwhile Marwan assembled the armies of Syria and marched towards Assyria. 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, with the Khurasani army, came and encamped on the River Zab in Assyria. 'Abdallah ibn Marwan did the same, on the west bank of the Zab, opposite the camp of the Persians. Both sides remained without engaging in battle until Marwan and his army came.

When Marwan arrived and entered the land of Assyria, crossing the Tigris, he sent word to his son 'Abdallah that he should cross the river Zab, pitch camp on the bank on the other side and surround it with a ditch.

850 The river was the Tigris, not the Euphrates, and the date was 24 not 22 January (though since Agapius is counting backwards from the end of the month it should be seven rather than nine, two numerals that are written almost identically in Arabic). Note that the translator gives AH 133, but the text has AH 132.

851 MSyr is defective at this point and this sentence represents the corresponding one in Bar Hebraeus, CS, 121.



Marwan encamped on the west side of the river and constructed a bridge over the Zab and readied the troops to join battle. He roused the soldiers in their mail, armed the cavalry and arranged the foot soldiers and the cavalymen, placing them in their ranks with great display, spurning the Persians, confident in the great number of his troops. And there was no doubt for him, as is said, that victory would be his. When the two sides approached each other and joined battle, leaping one upon the other, the ranks of the Persians were like an immovable wall, steadfast in battle, for they had earlier broken the scabbards of their swords.<sup>852</sup> They were fighting on foot with Marwan until the ninth hour and then, as the day was close to setting, Marwan and his army turned tail and fled. The Persians and wearers-of-black pursued them and hemmed them in at the river crossing and the bridge. Some of them were killed by swords, many of them were drowned in the river, some were seized by the hands of the enemy and those that escaped fled blindly. The wearers-of-black entered and took charge of the camp of the king's son, plundering his tents, all his riches and the men that were with him. Then they crossed to the camp of Marwan, collecting from it gold, silver, clothes, armour and possessions as innumerable as the sand on the sea shore. **It is said that 700 loads of gold and silver coins,** clothes and royal chattels were packed up with him. Thus stripped of his kingship Marwan escaped with his son, his son-in-law and thirty cavalymen in shame and ignominy to the city of Harran. The wearers-of-black remained in the camp for a month and a few days, rejoicing and celebrating in the division of the booty. The defeat of Marwan on the river Zab took place on Saturday, on 24 January, in the year 132 of the Arabs. From this year the rule passed from the sons of Umayyā to the sons of Hashim and the kingship of 'Abdallāh ibn Muhammad, named Abu l-'Abbas, was assured.

{**Theophilus the Astrologer:** Agapius: Theophilus the Astrologer, from whom we took these accounts, said: 'I was myself a constant witness of these wars. I would write things down so that nothing of them should escape me.' He has many books about that and we have abbreviated from them this book. We added to it what we perceived to be indispensable, but we avoided prolixity.}<sup>853</sup>

852 Presumably meaning that they were resolved either to die or vanquish, but not to stop, flee or surrender.

853 Agapius, 525. See the introduction above for discussion of this notice.

**(750) A son was born to King Constantine<sup>854</sup>**

Theophanes: On 25 January, of the same 3<sup>rd</sup> indiction, a son was born to King Constantine by the daughter of the Khagan of Khazaria and he called him Leo.

Agapius: not recorded

MSyr: **A son was born to Constantine by the daughter of the Khagan, king (of the Khazars). He was called Leo.**

*Chron 1234:* **A son was born to Constantine,** king of the Romans, **by the daughter of the Khagan,** king of the Khazars. **He was called Leo,** the name of his (Constantine's) father.

**(750) The Abbasids capture Damascus<sup>855</sup>**

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: When the coming of 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī reached Walid,<sup>856</sup> who was living in Damascus, he fortified himself in it and prepared for war, as Marwan had entrusted him to do. 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī came to him and besieged him. He had prepared ladders and placed them against the wall with the connivance of the people of Damascus. Those who supported Walid fought the men of 'Abdallāh and prevented them from ascending, and there was fighting between them over that. But one of the enemies of Walid ran and opened the gates of the city and the men of 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī entered and put (the inhabitants) to the sword. They continued cutting heads for three hours in the markets, the streets and houses, and they seized their possessions. At the time of the noon prayer 'Abdallāh ibn 'Alī ordered a halt to the massacre. Walid was among those killed and that day a great number of Christians and Jews were killed.

MSyr: not recorded

854 Theophanes, 426; MSyr 11.XXII, 465/506; *Chron 1234*, 325. The wording is almost the same in each case, but the notice is too short to be sure of a common source. Theophanes dates this to 25 January of the third indiction/750.

855 Agapius, 527; *Chron 1234*, 330–31. Tabari, 3.48, dates this to Ramadan AH 132/May 750, and confirms that the slaughter inside the city lasted for three hours.

856 Walid ibn Mu'awiya, Marwan II's son-in-law, married to Marwan's daughter, Umm al-Walid.



*Chron* 1234: When Walid, son-in-law of Marwan, heard of the coming of 'Abdallah, he fortified Damascus, where he resided and readied himself for fighting with 'Abdallah, as Marwan had ordered when he was passing through so as to delay him ('Abdallah) and prevent him from getting ahead of him. Thus there would be a chance for him (Marwan) to collect an army to fight him ('Abdallah) or at least to save himself. 'Abdallah arrived at Damascus and besieged it. He prepared ladders and set them against the wall. Inside were men ready to help him, but those who were loyal to Walid put up a fight and resisted those seeking to scale the wall. However, the supporters of 'Abdallah were more numerous than those opposing him. Those who had scaled the wall together with those who helped from inside opened the gates of the city and the majority of the army entered. They put to the sword people of all ages in the markets and streets, in the houses and public places. The killing lasted from the third to the sixth hour and they also plundered the city. Then 'Abdallah ordered that the slaughter and plunder stop. Walid, the son-in-law of Marwan, was among the slain and many Christians and Jews were killed along with Arabs.

#### (750) The flight and death of Marwan<sup>857</sup>

Theophanes: Taking all the money, his household as well as 3000 servants, Marwan fled to Egypt. | Marwan was pursued by the wearers-of-black (Maurophoroi), who captured him and killed him after waging a very heavy war. They were commanded by Salih ibn 'Ali (Salim son of Alim), one of the aforementioned fugitives<sup>858</sup> who had sent Abu Muslim on his mission...<sup>859</sup> Marwan's surviving sons and relatives went from Egypt to Africa, whence they crossed the narrow sea that separates Libya from Europe next to the ocean at a place called Septai<sup>860</sup> and settled until this day in Spain of Europe, where some kinsmen and co-religionists of theirs had come to dwell at an earlier time, these being descendants of Mu'awiya who had suffered shipwreck there.<sup>861</sup> The devastation in the days of Marwan lasted six years

<sup>857</sup> Theophanes, 425–26; Agapius, 526 | 526 | 527 | 528–29; Msyr 11.XXIV, 471/517; *Chron* 1234, 330... 331–32. Cf. Caetani, *Chronographia*, 1700–1702 (Dhu l-Hijja AH 132/August 750: death of Marwan); Tabari, 3.45–51.

<sup>858</sup> See the notice above on 'Abu Muslim and the beginning of the Abbasid revolt'.

<sup>859</sup> Here Theophanes gives the notice on the accession of Abu l-'Abbas that I have cited above.

<sup>860</sup> Arabic Sabta, modern Ceuta, on the north coast of Morocco, opposite Spain.

<sup>861</sup> This section seems a little muddled. 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiya made his way

and in the course of it all the prominent cities of Syria lost their walls except Antioch, which he had planned to use as a refuge. Innumerable Arabs were also killed by him for he was very cunning in civil matters. He belonged to the heresy of the Epicureans, that is, Automatists,<sup>862</sup> an impiety he had imbibed from the pagans who dwell at Harran.

Agapius: Marwan assembled his relatives and freedmen and loaded as much of his wealth and arms as he could and crossed the Euphrates. They went to Askalon<sup>863</sup> to wait and see what the Khurasanis would do next. | 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali went to Harran with the Khurasani troops and ordered the destruction of the palaces of Marwan that were in it, removing all trace<sup>864</sup> of him. He put Musa ibn Ka'b,<sup>865</sup> a man of the people of Khurasan, in charge of Mesopotamia and went off in pursuit of Marwan. | 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad dispatched Salih ibn 'Ali, his uncle, with a mighty army, to chase Marwan, ordering him to go by way of Qadisiyya and to head for Egypt to catch up with his brother 'Abdallah so that, once united, they could proceed together in pursuit of Marwan. | When Marwan learned of what 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali had done to the body of Walid and of the Damascenes' oath of allegiance to Abu l-'Abbas, his hopes were dashed. He fled in earnest with a small band of his freedmen and relatives and went to Egypt. He went up the Nile until he reached the borders of Nubia. Salih ibn 'Ali opposed him, for he had arrived ahead of his brother 'Abdallah, who had taken a while to take Damascus, then entered it and stayed there.

across Africa to Muslim Spain (al-Andalus), where he established himself as ruler from 138–172/756–788. His father, Mu'awiya ibn Hisham, had died young in 117/735; his mother had been a Nafza Berber from the Maghrib, and 'Abd al-Rahman was able to rest there a while after his flight from Syria. He had to win the support of various Umayyad clients already settled in Spain in order to attain the rule there. See *EI*, "Abd al-Rahman b. Mu'awiya".

<sup>862</sup> This either intends the idea that human actions are determined by mere chance (*automatōs*; see Kazdhan, 'Barlaam and Ioasaph', 1194) or by the heavens, a reference to Harranian pagan respect for the influence of planets and the moon on humans, or the idea of divination by subconscious means of perception (note the role of the head of the Harranian pagans in the notice above on 'A man claims to be the son of King Justinian'). In general, though, Theophanes simply wishes to denigrate Marwan by linking him with the notorious pagan community of Harran (see Green, *The City of the Moon God*).

<sup>863</sup> 'Asqalān. The modern town of Askalon, or Ashkelon, is a little north of Gaza, on the Palestinian littoral.

<sup>864</sup> This is a literal translation of *āthār*, which probably intends all the fixed things Marwan had left behind, such as buildings, gardens, etc.

<sup>865</sup> A key leader and general of the Abbasid revolution; see Crone, *Slaves*, 186, and Agha, *Revolution*, 365.



When Salih ibn 'Ali arrived in Fustat,<sup>866</sup> he dispatched one of his men called 'Amir ibn Isma'il with troops to chase Marwan ibn Muhammad. He caught up with him encamped on the Nile and attacked him by night. The men of Marwan fled from him and he remained on his own. He sought refuge on a hill there and kept on fighting until he fell and was killed. The sons of Marwan, 'Abdallah and 'Ubaydallah, disguised themselves and fled with a group of people and went to Syene,<sup>867</sup> which is on the Nile. Then 'Abdallah separated from 'Ubaydallah and took to the sea, travelling to Mecca. 'Ubaydallah went to Nubia, but they say that he became parched on the route and died.<sup>868</sup> 'Amir (ibn Isma'il) carried the head of Marwan and his corpse and the possessions that were with him back to Salih ibn 'Ali, who was in Fustat.<sup>869</sup> He ordered that the body of Marwan be crucified and that the head be cleaned and taken to his nephew Abu l-'Abbas.

MSyr: When **Marwan** had been defeated in various places and returned in shame, he was afraid to stay in **Harran**. He **loaded his treasures onto 3000 camels** and went off to **Askalon, which is on the coast of the sea**. Then **'Abdallah ibn 'Ali** set off in pursuit of him and so he (Marwan) fled from there. 'Abdallah sent an army to catch him. They went and found him **before the city of Syene, which is on the border of Nubia, encamped on the bank of the Nile**. There **Marwan was killed in battle** and 'Abdallah reigned alone over all the kingdom of the Arabs.

*Chron 1234*: **Marwan** and his son reached **Harran**, as we have said, after being chased out of Assyria, and cleared out the stores and **treasures** of the kingdom which had been deposited at Harran. He took his sons, relatives, servants and freedmen, some 10,000, and, having **loaded everything onto 3000 camels**, left Harran and crossed the Euphrates. He traversed Syria and Palestine and came as far as **Askalon, which is on the sea**. He remained there until news came to him of Abu l-'Abbas. The Arabs in Syria, when they saw that Marwan had crossed to the west, sent their submission to Abu l-'Abbas. Then **'Abdallah ibn 'Ali**, uncle of Abu l-'Abbas, set out and came to Harran with the Khurasani army. First of all he ordered that the estate houses of Marwan be pulled down, as also the palace which he had near

<sup>866</sup> Or possibly 'Egypt'; the same Arabic word, *Misr*, may be used to designate Egypt and also the Muslim garrison city of Fustat (now within modern Cairo).

<sup>867</sup> Written in the manuscript as *Asynā*. Syene, modern Aswan, is in the far south of modern Egypt.

<sup>868</sup> Cf. Tabari, 3.46, and Ibn Khayyat, 428.

<sup>869</sup> The text is fragmentary here; the words in square brackets are taken from *Chron 1234* whose account is very close to that of Agapius at this point.

Harran, at the village named Beth Botin.<sup>870</sup> After he ('Abdallah ibn 'Ali) had destroyed all his constructions he appointed as governor over Mesopotamia a man of the people of Khurasan who was with him and whose name was Musa ibn Ka'b. Then he set off hastily to catch up with Marwan...

Meanwhile, Abu l-'Abbas sent Salih ibn 'Ali, his uncle, with a capable army, and ordered him to proceed via the desert of Qadash until he joined up with his brother 'Abdallah so as to help him in pursuing Marwan. When Marwan heard of the killing of his son-in-law and the ravaging and plundering of Damascus, he gave up all hope of his life and headed for Egypt. Salih set off, with his brother 'Abdallah ahead of him, in pursuit of Marwan. When the latter entered Egypt and learned that Salih was coming after him, he left Egypt and went up via the river Nile **before the city of Syene, which is on the border of Nubia**. Thereupon Salih gave a man named 'Umar<sup>871</sup> a part of the army and dispatched him to speed up the pursuit of Marwan. This 'Umar hurried off and caught up with Marwan at night while he was **encamped on the bank of the Nile**. There was a night **battle** in the dark and the companions of Marwan scattered. **Marwan** stood on a certain hill and did not stop fighting until he **was killed**. His two sons, 'Abdallah and 'Ubaydallah, fled with a few men to Syene. 'Abdallah separated from his brother, crossed the Red Sea and came to Mecca, where he hid from the people who knew him. 'Ubaydallah entered the land of the Kushites,<sup>872</sup> a dry land, and he died of thirst. 'Amir ('Umar) carried the corpse of Marwan together with all his belongings and brought them to Salih in Babylon, which is Fustat.<sup>873</sup> Salih ordered that Marwan's head be cut off and sent it to King Abu l-'Abbas and crucified the body.

#### The killing of Ibn Hubayra at Wasit<sup>874</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

<sup>870</sup> Here 'estate houses' translates *sāhrātā* and 'palace' *āpadnā*; their meaning is quite similar.

<sup>871</sup> Presumably intending 'Amir ibn Isma'il, as in Agapius above and Tabari, 3.49–50; Ibn Khayyat, 428.

<sup>872</sup> Kush was an ancient kingdom centred on the confluence of the Blue and White Nile in what is now Sudan.

<sup>873</sup> Babylon was the name of the Roman area of the city and Fustat the name of the Muslim garrison city. See *EI*, 'al-Fustat', and n. 245 above.

<sup>874</sup> Agapius, 527–28; *Chron 1234*, 332. Cf. Tabari, 3.61–71; Ibn Khayyat, 422–26. See Elad, 'Siege of al-Wasit'.



Agapius: 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad Mansur had remained encamped by Wasit fighting Yazid ibn ('Umar ibn) Hubayra. When the distress of the people of Wasit became great, they requested Yazid to leave them, saying to him: 'If you refuse, we will aid your enemies.' Yazid, therefore, corresponded with Mansur about a guarantee of safety, which Mansur gave to him and to his men and they came out to him on this proviso. But Mansur ordered the execution of Yazid and the destruction of the wall of Wasit. He returned to his brother Abu l-'Abbas with the news.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: The brother of 'Abdallah, known as Abu Ja'far, remained for a long time besieging the city of Wasit. Finally he gave his word and an agreement to Ibn Hubayra and those who were with him on the basis that they would surrender the city to him and no harm would come to them. In accordance with this covenant they opened the city and Ibn Hubayra and his companions came out to him. However, Abu Ja'far broke his agreement, seized Ibn Hubayra and killed him, and pulled down the walls of Wasit. He left and went to his brother Abu l-'Abbas.

#### The construction of the city of Anbar<sup>875</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: Abu l-'Abbas ordered that there be built for him a city which he might live in. So they built for him a city on the Euphrates and named it Anbar and he lived in it.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: King 'Abdallah, known as Abu l-'Abbas, ordered that there be built for him a city beside Pirshabur, which they called Anbar. When it had been built according to his command he made it his residence. It is to the west of Baghdad, on the river Euphrates.

<sup>875</sup> Agapius, 528; *Chron 1234*, 332. Anbar is the Arab name for the city of Peroz Shapur (Perisapora/Pirshabur), founded by Emperor Shapur II around the year 350; it lies on the east bank of the Euphrates, near the modern town of Fallujah, west of Baghdad. On the Abbasid capital before Baghdad see *EI*, 'al-Hashimiyya'.

#### The massacre of the Umayyads<sup>876</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded (though he notes, on p. 427: 'The new masters slew the greater part of the Christians whom they had treacherously arrested at Antipatris,<sup>877</sup> because of their being related to the previous rulers').

Agapius: While Salih ibn 'Ali was residing in Palestine, there gathered to him about seventy men of the Umayyad clan. They approached him reading and intoning (the Qur'an). They thought that that would encourage him to pardon them, for he had already given them a guarantee of their lives and possessions. He ordered them one day to enter his palace and he positioned at the head of each one of them two Khurasani men with iron bars in their hands. While they were addressing him, he gave a sign with his eyes to the Khurasanis and they pounded them with the bars. Their heads were removed and he (Salih) sent them to Abu l-'Abbas. He seized their wealth sought out any survivors and pursued them aggressively in Palestine until he annihilated them.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, after he had returned from hunting down Marwan, established his headquarters in Palestine, at a place called Antipatris. Many of the Umayyad clan gathered to him, seventy men in number. He gave his word to them that he would not harm them and they trusted him since he was of the same race as them. He ordered them to enter ahead of him the villa in which he was staying. One by one he slew them with iron bars. He cut off their heads and sent them to Abu l-'Abbas. He ordered that their wealth be plundered and their kinsmen be killed wherever they were found. He searched for them in Palestine, Arabia and everywhere.

<sup>876</sup> Agapius, 529; *Chron 1234*, 333. Both accounts, and especially that of Agapius (though he has Salih ibn 'Ali instead of 'Abdallah), are very close to Muslim descriptions of this event. E.g. Ya'qubi, 2.425–26: *aqāma* ('Abdallah) 'alā ra's kull rajul minhum (the Umayyads) rajulayn bi-l-'umud / Agapius: *aqāma* 'inda ra's kull wāhid minhum rajulayn min abna' Khurāsān bi-aydayhim al-'umud al-ḥadīd (this is so close that we must either assume that Agapius has reworded TC here in the light of his Muslim source or that TC was borrowing from Muslim sources or, less likely I think, that Muslim sources borrow from TC). Azdi, *TM*, 138–39, also gives quite a detailed account, but Ibn Khayyat, 428, and Tabari, 3.51, just note that 80 or 72 men of the Umayyads were killed by 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali at Antipatris, without any gory details, presumably because they or their sources were more sympathetic to the Abbasids. See Robinson, 'The Violence of the Abbasid Revolution'.

<sup>877</sup> Ancient Aphek, rebuilt by Herod the Great and named after his father, Antipas. It lies on the coast of central Palestine, north-east of modern Tel Aviv. See *EI*, 'Abū Futrus'.



(750–51) The revolt of the Syrian Arabs against the Abbasids<sup>878</sup>

Theophanes: The inhabitants of Chalcis rose up against the Persian wearers-of-black and 4000 of them were killed in the territory of Hims. The same happened in Arabia to the Qaysite Arabs (Kaisinoi) at the hands of the same Persians. Most of the rebellions ceased on the arrival of Marwan's embalmed head.

Agapius: The Arabs of Syria regretted what they had done because of the shame that had fallen on them and the ascendancy over them of the Persians,<sup>879</sup> who were now occupying their houses and seizing their wealth. For that reason they rose up, caused disturbance and withheld their allegiance. Among them were Habib ibn Murra of Qays, who was based in Ramla<sup>880</sup> and its environs; Abu l-Ward of Qays, who was in Syria and the surrounding area; and Mansur ibn Ja'wana of Qays, who was in Mesopotamia. There was commotion and civil war in every place and they would not give allegiance to the clan of Hashim. Then Habib ibn Murra came to Damascus and expelled the Arabs<sup>881</sup> from it and took control of it. Abu l-Ward mustered a considerable host of Arabs and they went out seeking 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali. The latter went from Palestine to Hims and encamped in a meadow to the east of it and ordered his men to prepare for battle. Abu l-Ward drew near and when 'Abdallah saw the numerousness of the men of Abu l-Ward he felt a twinge of cowardice. War was initiated between them and a great number was killed on both sides. Abu l-Ward and his men were defeated. 'Abdallah took (the submission) of the people of Syria and returned to Damascus, where he encountered Habib ibn Murra and killed him and his men. He took the oath of allegiance of the people of Damascus and the rest of the cities of the Syrias.

878 Theophanes, 427; Agapius, 529–30; *Chron 1234*, 333–34. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 195–96 (AG 1061/749–50); Tabari, 3.52–56; Baladhuri, 192 (Mansur ibn Ja'wana, on whom see also Crone, *Slaves*, 168). These various rebellions (see also the next notice on 'The revolt of the Mesopotamian Arabs') mostly occurred in late AH 132 and the first part of 133/autumn 750–summer 751; see Cobb, *White Banners*, 44–51.

879 *Al-'ajam*: this can just mean non-Arabs (in contrast to *al-'arab*), but very often, as here, it refers to Persians in particular.

880 Ramla, south-east of modern Tel Aviv, was a new city built by the caliph Sulayman, ca. 715, to be the capital of the province of Palestine (see *EI*, 'Ramla'). On Habib ibn Murra see Crone, *Slaves*, 167; note that Muslim sources tend to place his centre of activity not in Palestine, but in the region of modern north Jordan/south Syria (e.g. Tabari, 3.52), which agrees with *Chron 1234*'s reference to 'the province of (Roman) Arabia'.

881 One assumes this is a mistake for Khurasanis. Cf. Tabari, 3.53.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: When the Arabs of Syria saw with their own eyes how they were looked down upon, how they were brought low and humiliated before the Persians, and how slaves ruled over free men and abused their noble wives, they were imbued with zeal and filled with fury and many of them revolted against the king. In the province of Arabia a man from the Qaysites revolted, whose name was Habib ibn Murra, and in Syria another man of the Qaysites, whose name was Abu l-Ward, and in Mesopotamia Mansur ibn Ja'wana. At this time there was great commotion and disorder, for the Arabs regretted that they were subjects of the Hashimites. Then Habib ibn Murra came to Damascus and expelled the Khurasanis who were in it. Abu l-Ward collected many Arab troops from Syria and marched against 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali. When the latter heard this he set off for Hims. They encountered one another at Hama, in a meadow called Marj Harma.<sup>882</sup> When they joined battle, many fell of both sides, but in the end victory inclined to 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali. He triumphed and killed Abu l-Ward and many of those with him. He made peace with Syria and Phoenicia and returned to Damascus. He attacked again Habib and his companions, who gave way before him. He then pacified Damascus and its region.

The revolt of the Mesopotamian Arabs against the Abbasids<sup>883</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: Then Ishaq ibn Muslim<sup>884</sup> revolted at Samosata and the notables of Qays joined with him. A man of the Arabs had already been put in charge

882 Tabari, 3.53, calls it Marj al-Akhram; he also says that 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali did not wage battle himself, but sent his brother 'Abd al-Samad. He also records that Abu l-Ward was acting on behalf of one Abu Muhammad, said to be a descendant of the caliph Yazid I. It was subsequently said that Abu Muhammad had not died, but had gone into hiding, and he became a focus of messianic anti-Abbasid sentiment. See *EI*, 'al-Sufyani'.

883 Agapius, 530–31; *Chron 1234*, 334–35. Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 196–200 (AG 1062/750–51); Tabari, 3.56–58. Dionysius (in MSyr 11.XXIV, 471–72/518–20, and *Chron 1234*, 335–36) then gives an account of an incident which caused consternation in the camp of 'Abdallah, namely the apparition of eight men above their graves, some of whom had their beards died with henna, 'as it is the custom of the Arabs to do'.

884 Ishaq ibn Muslim al-'Uqayli, governor of Armenia for Marwan II. See Crone, *Slaves*, 106–7.



of each of the cities of Mesopotamia:<sup>885</sup> Circesium, Resh'aina, Tella, Kafartuta, Thamanin, Amida, Mayferqat and the rest of the cities. Harran was in the hands of Musa ibn Ka'b, who resided there. The Arabs of Mesopotamia gathered together and headed for Harran and they fought with Musa ibn Ka'b. But when the Arabs heard of the killing of Abu l-Ward, they dispersed and were defeated to the last man. This affair reached 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad who dispatched 'Abdallah Mansur with a large army to Mesopotamia to restore the cities to the people and to fight whoever did not give allegiance. When he arrived at Circesium he appointed over it one of his men and proceeded to Harran. As for 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, he took the oath of allegiance from the armies of the Syrias and Assyria<sup>886</sup> and travelled to Samosata in the days of winter. He pushed on to Ishaq ibn Muslim and Mansur ibn Ja'wana, gave them guarantees of safety and they came out to him. He captured Samosata and took the oath of allegiance of its people. Likewise 'Abdallah Mansur captured all the cities of Mesopotamia and took their oath of allegiance. The trouble had continued for nine months.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: Mansur ibn Ja'wana seized Edessa, fortified it and strengthened his hold on it. Many of the Qaysites gathered to him and he prepared for battle. Likewise Ishaq ibn Muslim seized Samosata and occupied it. In this way one or another of the chiefs of the Arabs took control of all the cities of Mesopotamia; I am speaking of Callinicum, Circesium, Nisibis, Dara, Tella, Resh'aina, Amida and Mayferqat. Then all the Arabs of Mesopotamia gathered at Harran, which was held by the Khurasanis. They waged a violent battle there. Musa ibn Ka'b opposed them with violence and force. While they were attacking the city, news came of the defeat of Abu l-Ward and Habib. When the Arabs who were besieging Harran heard this, no man looked back to his companion, rather all of them dispersed and every man went to his own region. When 'Abdallah Abu l-'Abbas heard this he sent

885 Vasiliev has translated this as: 'He (Ishaq ibn Muslim) had already put an Arab in charge of most of the cities of Mesopotamia', presumably assuming the nominative of 'man' (*rajulun*) is a mistake for the accusative (*rajulan*). Agapius' phrasing is awkward, but it is clearly related to *Chron 1234*'s wording: 'one or another of the chiefs of the Arabs took control of them (the cities of Mesopotamia)' (*aḥed eneyn nāsh nāsh men rawrbānē d-ṭayyāyē*). Agapius probably wants to say that in each of the cities of Mesopotamia an Arab had been put in charge.

886 *Al-shāmāt wa-sūriya*: the provinces/military units (*junds*) of Syria (Palestine, Jordan, Damascus, Hims and Qinnasrin) and, probably, northern Iraq (or possibly northern Mesopotamia); see n. 509 above.

his brother Abu Ja'far to Mesopotamia with a large army. He passed first Circesium and left in charge of it a man whose name was Nasr,<sup>887</sup> with a part of the army with him. There was then in Circesium a man of Quraysh called Mundhir ibn Zubayr. Abu Ja'far came to Harran. Also 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, son of his uncle, came from Syria heading for Samosata. Abu Ja'far went up from Harran to besiege Edessa. When he approached its walls, the Arabs who were in it came out. They killed many from his camp. Abu Ja'far then pitched camp on the river of the Medes<sup>888</sup> and began to plunder and lay waste the region of Mesopotamia for a period of nine months. After this he went to besiege the city of Dara and took it. 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, who was besieging Samosata with guile and stratagems, did not cease until he had made Mansur ibn Ja'wana, governor of Edessa, and Ishaq ibn Muslim, governor of Samosata, submit of their own volition and hand over the cities to him. In the same way Nasr captured Circesium and the Khurasanis thus took all the cities of Mesopotamia. Mundhir crucified on wood the governor of Circesium and Abu Ja'far ordered that all the walls of the cities of Mesopotamia be taken out, and he destroyed also the wall of Edessa and all the cities except for Mayferqat and Harran.

#### (751) The Romans attack Melitene and Armenia<sup>889</sup>

Theophanes: Constantine occupied Theodosiopolis<sup>890</sup> as well as Melitene and conquered the Armenians.

Agapius: While the people were thus afflicted (i.e. by these rebellions), the king of the Romans raided Melitene, captured it, took its people captive and returned. Kushan, patriarch of the Armenians, took all the people of Armenia and brought them into the land of the Romans.

887 Not known from any other source.

888 Tabari, 3.57, says that the two armies were encamped either side of the river Euphrates, so this must be meant here, though it is a little far west to be called the river of the Medes.

889 Theophanes, 427; Agapius, 531; MSyr 11.XXIV, 472/518 (AG 1063/751-52); *Chron 1234*, 336-37 (AG 1063). Theophanes may have this notice from TC (Nicephorus, §70, mentions the capture of Melitene, but not Armenia), but it is too brief to be sure; he later says that Constantine resettled these captives in Thrace. Cf. Tabari, 3.121, and Ibn Khayyat, 435 (AH 133/750-51), who says Constantine destroyed the congregational mosque and the governor's residence.

890 Arabic: Qaliqala; Armenian: Karno K'aghak'; it corresponds to Erzerum in modern eastern Turkey.



**MSyr: Constantine went out and besieged Melitene and erected ramparts against it. He made a breach in a part of its wall. In the end he gave a guarantee of safety to the Arabs who were in it and let them leave. He led into exile and took captive the people of Claudia and all the villages of Fourth Armenia.**<sup>891</sup>

*Chron 1234:* King Constantine went out with the Roman army and besieged the city of Melitene and erected ramparts against it. He made a breach in a part of its wall. In the end he gave a guarantee of safety to the Arabs who were in it and let them leave with their households. He led into exile the Christian inhabitants of the villages and took captives in the region of Claudia and Armenia. He set fire to Claudia. While the Romans were in Armenia, Khalid ibn 'Akki,<sup>892</sup> governor of Edessa, came with Arab troops. They fell into battle with each other and the Arabs were defeated. Khalid fled and many of his troops were killed. The Romans burned Armenia and deported its inhabitants to the land of the Romans.

#### **Abu l-'Abbas brings the treasuries to Iraq and appoints governors**<sup>893</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad (Abu l-'Abbas) sent word to Harran for the state treasuries of the Umayyads to be transported to Anbar. He appointed Salih ibn 'Ali as governor over Egypt and its environs, 'Abdallah Mansur over Mesopotamia and Armenia, and Yahya ibn Muhammad<sup>894</sup> over Mosul and its environs.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234:* 'Abdallah Abu l-'Abbas sent word to bring from Harran whatever remained in the state treasuries, into which great riches had been

<sup>891</sup> The region centred around the Arsianias river (the modern river Murat, which flows into the river Euphrates, flowing westwards from Mount Ararat), east of Melitene.

<sup>892</sup> A Khalid al-'Akki is mentioned as the commander of the guard of the Kufa gate of Mansur's Baghdad (Baghdadi, 1.77), but it is difficult to be sure whether it is the same one. One might assume that the Abbasid general Muqatil al-'Akki is meant (see n. 909 below), for he was governor in Harran (which often went together with Edessa) when Mansur was in charge of Mesopotamia on behalf of the caliph Abu l-'Abbas (noted by *Chron Zuqnin*, 195, and see next notice below on Abu l-'Abbas' appointment of governors).

<sup>893</sup> Agapius, 531–32; *Chron 1234*, 338 (AG 1065/753–54).

<sup>894</sup> Yahya ibn Muhammad was, like 'Abdallah (ibn Muhammad) Mansur, brother of Abu l-'Abbas.

deposited in the time of Marwan, and he placed it in the city that he had built. He appointed Salih ibn 'Ali as governor over all Egypt and Libya, 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, brother of Salih, over Syria, Damascus, Palestine and Phoenicia, Abu Ja'far (Mansur) over Mesopotamia and Armenia, and Yahya, his brother, over all Assyria, Mosul and Niniveh.

#### **Yahya ibn Muhammad massacres the chiefs of Mosul**<sup>895</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: When Yahya ibn Muhammad entered Mosul, he ordered that the Arabs of Mosul and their chiefs be assembled in the congregational mosque and be massacred there at one go. He also massacred their women and children. A great anguish came over the Arabs at this and shame and humiliation overwhelmed them. The clan of Hashim acted harshly towards everyone; they burdened them with taxes and seized the wealth of all the Arabs.

MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234:* When Yahya took up his governorship in Mosul, he assembled many of the chiefs of Mosul in a certain mosque and killed them. The rest fled and went into hiding. One of the chief men of Yahya's senior officials was present, Ibn Fadl by name. He tricked thirty of the leading men of the city, with whom Yahya was angry. He led them into an underground chamber, as if to hide them while he interceded for them. He led them out one after another and slit their throats like sheep. He placed their heads on dishes over which he spread handkerchiefs and sent them to Yahya. They (Yahya's entourage) were thinking that they would see something precious. When Yahya saw them (the heads), he jumped up in joy, then kneeled down and prayed. Immediately he ordered that all their kin be killed. They (Yahya's soldiers) passed along in the streets, swords drawn, killing without compassion women and maidens, children and infants. This Yahya committed indescribable atrocities in Mosul.

<sup>895</sup> Agapius, 532; *Chron 1234*, 338–39. *Chron 1234* gives much detail, which agrees with the eyewitness reports provided by Azdi, *TM*, 145–53 (AH 133/750–51); Ibn Khayyat, 436, dates the event to AH 134/751–52. See Robinson, *Empires and Elites*, 127–46.



**(754) Constantine convenes a council**<sup>896</sup>

Theophanes: The impious Constantine convened in the palace of Hiereia<sup>897</sup> an illegal assembly of 338 bishops against the holy and venerable icons... They proclaimed their misguided heresy (of iconoclasm) in front of all the people after anathematising the most holy Germanus, George of Cyprus and John of Damascus, (known as) the golden speaker, son of Mansur,<sup>898</sup> holy men and venerable teachers.

Agapius: Constantine, king of the Romans, convened at Constantinople a council of some 300 bishops on the subject of the images in the churches. They examined and considered whether prostration to them<sup>899</sup> was obligatory or not. They agreed that it was not necessary to prostrate before them and indeed that it was absolutely not permitted. They adduced testimonies from God's sacred scripture, old and new, and from the sayings of the Fathers. They anathematised John son of Mansur the Damascene and Gregory of Cyprus. They instituted many canons and called this the Seventh Council.

MSyr: King **Constantine convened** at Constantinople **a council** of the Chalcedonian **bishops** of the provinces of Rome, Dalmatia, Helladia, Cilicia and Sicily. They came together on the subject of images, to determine whether one should worship them or not. They established a **decree** and a definition (which said) **that one should absolutely not worship** images. They called this gathering the Seventh Council. However, some of them did not agree to recognise it, since they did not make a confession of faith. The Chalcedonians **hate this** Constantine and call him iconophobe because he convened this council in which he determined that one should not worship icons and **anathematised John, George of Damascus** and George of Cyprus, for they

<sup>896</sup> Theophanes, 427–28 (drawing on a Byzantine source; cf. Nicephorus, §72); Agapius, 533; MSyr 11.XXIV, 472–73/520–21 (AG 1065/753–54); *Chron* 1234, 337. All except Theophanes miscopy the names of those anathematised. On this iconoclastic council see Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm...* *Constantine V*, esp. 53ff; Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 363–70.

<sup>897</sup> Situated on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, near Chalcedon. The deliberations lasted from February to August of the year 754.

<sup>898</sup> A very famous Byzantine theologian and staunch iconophile; for bibliography see *PMBZ*, 'Ioannes Damaskenos' 2969. Germanus was a former patriarch of Constantinople, but George is not otherwise attested, unless he is the same as a certain 'George monk of the Nouthesia' (Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 369).

<sup>899</sup> *Al-sujūd la-hā*; probably one should translate 'worship of them', since this is the sense of the Syriac verb *sgd* (i.e. the Arabic and Syriac verbs *sgd* share the same letters, but have subtly different meanings, though they are of course linked), as used by Dionysius in his version of this report.

maintained the doctrine of Maximus. King Constantine was a cultured man, who adhered firmly to the mysteries of the orthodox faith, which is why the Chalcedonians hated him.

*Chron* 1234: **Constantine convened a council of bishops and they decreed that one should absolutely not worship** figures.<sup>900</sup> **At this council they anathematised** Sergius and **John** son of Mansur and **George of Damascus**. For this reason, until today, the Romans **hate this** king, because he decreed that one should not worship icons and images.

**(754) Abu Ja'far and Abu Muslim go on pilgrimage to Mecca**<sup>901</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad wrote to Abu Muslim, who was then in Khurasan, ordering him to come to him, and (he wrote) also to 'Abdallah Mansur that he should set off towards him. When they both arrived before him, he commanded 'Abdallah to go off to Mecca and lead the people in pilgrimage and Abu Muslim to accompany him. In secret he intimated to his brother that if he could take the head of Abu Muslim then he should do so. Thus they travelled together, with numerous Arab and Persian troops.

MSyr: see section on Abu l-'Abbas' death below.

*Chron* 1234: Abu Muslim and Abu Ja'far went to Mecca in order to pray.

**(754) Abu l-'Abbas instructs 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali to campaign in Asia Minor**<sup>902</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: He ('Abdallah ibn Muhammad) wrote to 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali that he should lead the raiding expedition (against Byzantium) and so he raided Roman territory, but he returned without having had any success.

<sup>900</sup> Using *šūrātā*, which I translate as 'figures' to distinguish it from MSyr's *šalmē*, which I translate as 'images'.

<sup>901</sup> Agapius, 532–33; *Chron* 1234, 339. Cf. Tabari, 3.84–87 (summer AH 136/754), who also recounts, though in a different way to Agapius, the first steps towards the assassination of Abu Muslim.

<sup>902</sup> Agapius, 533; *Chron* 1234, 339. Cf. Tabari, 3.91 (the summer campaign of AH 136/754).



MSyr: not recorded

*Chron 1234*: Abu l-'Abbas instructed 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali to muster Arab and Persian troops and to invade Roman territory.

**(754) The death of Abu l-'Abbas and the revolt of 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali**<sup>903</sup>

Theophanes:<sup>904</sup> ('Abdallah ibn) Muhammad, also called Abu l-'Abbas, died after a reign of five years.<sup>905</sup> His brother 'Abdallah (Mansur), who was then at Mecca, the place of their blasphemy, wrote to Abu Muslim, who was in Persia, to guard the throne for him, as it had been allotted (to him). Now Abu Muslim, on being informed that 'Abdallah, son of 'Ali and brother of Salih, sole commander of Syria, was seeking the kingship and marching to take possession of Persia and that he was hostile to the Persians and friendly to the Syrians, who supported him, roused his army and engaged him at Nisibis.<sup>906</sup> Having vanquished him, Abu Muslim killed many men, most of whom were Slavs and Antiochenes. 'Abdallah (ibn 'Ali), who alone escaped, sought a few days later a pledge from the other 'Abdallah (Mansur), ('Abdallah ibn) Muhammad's brother, who in great haste had arrived in Persia from Mecca. The latter, however, confined him in a ramshackle hut, the foundations of which he ordered to be dug up, and so killed him by stealth.

Agapius:<sup>907</sup> 'Abdallah Mansur entered Mecca, attended the pilgrimage and then left. Meanwhile, Abu l-'Abbas 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad had died. His death occurred on a Sunday, 7 June, year 136 of the Arabs. His reign had lasted for four years and ten months. He bequeathed the caliphate to Abu Ja'far 'Abdallah Mansur and then to his cousin 'Isa ibn Musa. When 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali learned of the death of 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad (Abu l-'Abbas) and observed the absence of 'Abdallah Mansur and Abu Muslim,

903 Theophanes, 428–29; Agapius, 533 | 534–36; MSyr 11.XXIV, 472–73/518 (AG 1065/753–54); *Chron 1234*, 339. See Cobb, *White Banners*, 23–27.

904 Theophanes' account has some similarities with TC (e.g. Mansur is at Mecca, the battle between Abu Muslim and 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali is by Nisibis), but the additional material he adduces suggests that he does not have it directly from TC.

905 Agapius and *Chron 1234* say that Abu l-'Abbas died in Dhu l-Hijja AH 136/June 754; thus also Muslim sources (e.g. Tabari, 3.88; Ibn Khayyat, 437).

906 Recorded also by Ibn Khayyat, 464 (Jumada I AH 137/October 754).

907 Agapius' account is very close to that of Muslim sources; cf. Tabari, 3.87–88 (death of Abu l-'Abbas), 92–99 (revolt of 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali), including the key battle at Nisibis in Jumada II 137/November 754.

he desired the kingship and enjoined the Arabs and Khurasanis<sup>908</sup> who were with him to pledge allegiance to him. They did so, except for Salih ibn 'Ali, his brother, who did not pledge allegiance to him. He ('Abdallah ibn 'Ali) had intended to raid (Byzantium), but now that he desired the kingship he did not raid and instead went up to Mesopotamia.

At Harran there was a man called Muqatil, known as al-'Akki,<sup>909</sup> who had many troops, which 'Abdallah Mansur had prepared for the purposes of maintaining his position until his return from pilgrimage. So he (Muqatil) watched over Harran and did not pledge allegiance to 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali. When the latter came to Harran, he set up catapults and attacked them with them for forty days. Then they requested a guarantee of safety, which he gave them and so they opened the gate of the city to him. When 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali had captured Harran, he left for Iraq. He preferred the Arabs to the Khurasanis and he favoured them with offices and honours. He began to kill the Persians and to take their wealth giving it to the Arabs. At this point 'Abdallah Mansur came from Mecca and with him was Abu Muslim. He entered Kufa and gave a sermon at its pulpit (i.e. in its central mosque), summoning them to his caliphate, and the people pledged allegiance to him. 'Isa ibn Musa, before the arrival of 'Abdallah Mansur, had gathered the Arabs of the east and the Khurasanis and he had read out to them the will of Abu l-'Abbas and informed them that 'Abdallah Mansur was the one to succeed him as caliph. And by exhortations and promises he had extracted their oath of allegiance to 'Abdallah Mansur.

When Mansur arrived he found his troops already in obedience to him; the rule settled on him and his grip on power was secure. He ordered Abu Muslim to march to Mosul with a large army to engage 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, who was then at Circesium. When 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali heard that Abu Muslim had departed from Anbar and had taken the road to Mosul, he went down to the Euphrates, took the (tributary river of the) Khabur as far as the place where the Khabur and Euphrates rivers meet, then he travelled along the Euphrates until he reached Nisibis,<sup>910</sup> which he besieged. Abu

908 Here and in the rest of this passage in Agapius the term for Khurasanis is *abnā'* *Khurasan* or just *al-abnā'* (literally 'the sons'); this could mean all the Khurasani soldiers who fought for the Abbasid dynasty or could refer to just the elite members of this soldiery, i.e. the commanders and generals.

909 He fought in the Abbasid revolution and was appointed to a post in Mesopotamia by Mansur; see Crone, *Slaves*, 185–86, and Agha, *Revolution*, 364.

910 Vasiliev gives the name of the river as the Hirmas; the word is corrupt in the manuscript, and so it is difficult to discern the name, but only the Euphrates fits the description of the course of the river supplied by Agapius.



Muslim passed by as though heading for Resh'aina and so 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali pursued him. When Abu Muslim learned of this, he left the road to Resh'aina and doubled back on to another road, arriving at Nisibis, which he occupied and then positioned himself between the city and 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali. The latter, on learning that Abu Muslim had taken Nisibis, was a little afraid. Whenever he moved from one place to another, he began surrounding his camp with trenches, guards and thorny bushes. Then one of them approached the other and battle was waged between them day after day and a huge number was killed on both sides. There appeared in the sky a sign like a lance of fire, stretching from east to west, and it began to extend and contract,<sup>911</sup> and all the while the battle against 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali went on. Finally Abu Muslim, in one of his attacks against 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali, overwhelmed him and he and his men were defeated by him. They (Abu Muslim's men) set themselves to killing 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali's men and they despoiled their camp. 'Abdallah fled and went into hiding. His location was unknown and he remained in hiding until he appeared in Basra at the place of his brother Sulayman ibn 'Ali.<sup>912</sup>

I Salih dispatched Abu 'Awn from Egypt with a large army to Palestine. He hunted down certain Arab tribes and began to slaughter them until he had wiped them out to the last man and their possessions and animals were pillaged. I 'Abdallah Mansur dispatched a man called Jahwar, with a Khurasani contingent, to Circesium. He entered it and, together with Hamid ibn Qahataba, killed 20,000 men of the Arabs, (and chased them) as far as Mosul. This was because he had heard that 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali had reached Harran and the other cities of Mesopotamia. Then he gave a guarantee of safety to all the Arabs of Mesopotamia and the Syrians after they had despaired and their hope of life had been severed.<sup>913</sup>

MSyr: 'Abdallah **Abu l-'Abbas died** after reigning for four years and ten months. When 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali learned of the death of 'Abdallah Abu l-'Abbas, he began to rule over the Persians and the Arabs. Again there

911 Also reported by Msyr 11.XXIV, 472/520 ('the star known as "the sword" was seen before sunrise, stretching from the western region towards the east').

912 Another uncle of the first two Abbasid caliphs and governor of Basra for each of them until 139/756; see *EI*, 'Sulayman b. 'Ali'.

913 Jahwar (incorrectly written Jawhar in the text) ibn Marrar al-Ijli was sent in part to punish those Arabs at Circesium and elsewhere in Mesopotamia and Syria who had supported 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali and in part to capture 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali himself and his brother 'Abd al-Samad (cf. Tabari, 3.98; see Agha, *Revolution*, 354–55). Note that Cheikh's edition of Agapius misses out a few words from this paragraph.

was trouble among them, for Abu l-'Abbas, at the time of his death had **bequeathed the kingdom to Abu Ja'far**. The latter was on his way to **Mecca for prayer**. This is why ('Abdallah) Ibn 'Ali had begun to go around the cities and to govern. When Abu Ja'far returned and came to 'Aqla, **he took charge of the east of the kingdom** and by the agency of his general **Abu Muslim he defeated 'Abdallah**.

*Chron* 1234:<sup>914</sup> 'Abdallah (ibn 'Ali) had got as far as the meadow of Dabiq and was collecting troops there when he received the news, on 9 June of AG 1065 (754), that **Abu l-'Abbas had died and bequeathed the kingdom to his brother Abu Ja'far**. While the latter was at **Mecca** on his **prayer journey**, 'Abdallah ibn 'Ali declared himself ruler over the troops that he had gathered together with him. Abu Ja'far went to Kufa and **took charge of the east of the kingdom** and he sent **Abu Muslim**<sup>915</sup> to fight against 'Abdallah. When the two sides met and waged battle with one another, **'Abdallah was defeated**.

#### (755) The assassination of Abu Muslim<sup>916</sup>

Theophanes: Abu Muslim was incensed at the Syrian Arabs for having rebelled against the wearers-of-black and for having taken many captives in Palestine, Hims and on the sea coast, and he was intending to attack them with his army, but 'Abdallah (Mansur) held him back. The other, furious at 'Abdallah, withdrew with his forces to inner Persia. Being very much afraid of him, 'Abdallah called him back by means of plausible excuses and entreaties, even with the help of the abominable symbols of their kingship – I mean the staff and sandals<sup>917</sup> of the false prophet Muhammad – asking him

914 Hereafter the content of *Chron* 1234 changes noticeably. The actions of Muslim authorities are still noted, but only very briefly (e.g. 'Abu Ja'far built a city on the Tigris above Ctesiphon and called it Baghdad') or only insofar as they impinged upon the Christian population (e.g. the harsh policies of Musa ibn Mus'ab, governor of Mesopotamia); there is no longer any concern with internal Muslim politics. It is likely, then, that TC stops at this point, with the consolidation of the rule of Abu Ja'far Mansur. For completeness I shall, however, note the coincidences that still occur in a few notices of Msyr and Agapius.

915 *Chron* 1234 has Abu Salim here, but the author is confused and one should read Abu Muslim.

916 Theophanes, 429; Agapius, 536–37; Msyr 11.XXIV, 473/518; *Chron* 1234, 339. Cf. Tabari, 3.99–117.

917 The staff (*qaḍīb*) of Muhammad is mentioned by Muslim authors (e.g. Dhahabi, 17.327), but not his sandals.



to turn aside the distance of one day's journey in his direction that he might pay him the gratitude due to a father. Thus deceived, Abu Muslim arrived with 100,000 horsemen and, when he had joined 'Abdallah, the latter killed him with his own hands. The army immediately scattered and departed after receiving considerable largesse. In this manner 'Abdallah achieved the kingship.

Agapius: Abu Muslim returned from Harran by way of Mosul. Then he left the road to Kufa and Anbar and took the road to Hulwan,<sup>918</sup> which is between Azerbaijan and Iraq, resolving not to return to Abu Ja'far. When the latter heard of Abu Muslim's journey to Khurasan and of his resolution not to see him, he dispatched 'Isa ibn Musa to him. He came to him and kept on plying him with kindness and compassion, promises, flattery and sweet stratagems until he deflected his mind from his previous resolution and turned him away from it. So he (Abu Muslim) came with him ('Isa ibn Musa) to Abu Ja'far Mansur who, on his arrival, had him killed as soon as he entered<sup>919</sup> into his presence.

MSyr: **Abu Muslim revolted** against **Abu Ja'far**, wanting to reign himself. While he **was going around** the cities and planning to usurp the kingship, Abu Ja'far sent to him a certain **'Isa** who, **by flattery**, won him over and brought him (to Abu Ja'far). Just as he entered, Abu Ja'far **made a sign**<sup>920</sup> and Abu Muslim was **killed**. Then the kingdom of the Arabs was consolidated and found itself united under the rule of Abu Ja'far.

*Chron 1234*: **Abu Muslim**<sup>921</sup> **was going around** the western regions and it was said to **Abu Ja'far** that he (Abu Muslim) wanted to **revolt** and that it was by his (Abu Muslim's) hand that there was tumult in Syria. When Abu Ja'far saw that many Arabs were siding with Abu Muslim, he lured (him to him) by the blandishments and **flattery of 'Isa**. He (Abu Muslim) came to Abu Ja'far; when he appeared before him, he (Abu Ja'far) **made a sign** to his soldiers and they **killed** him.

918 This itinerary is also given by Tabari, 3.105, who continues with the same tale, though at much greater length (*ibid.*, 3.105–15) of how Abu Ja'far got 'Isa ibn Musa and/or others to induce Abu Muslim to come to him. Ibn Khayyat, 441–42 (Shaban AH 137/Jan.–Feb. 755), has Salama ibn Sa'id (also mentioned by Tabari), a relative of Abu Muslim, do the inducing.

919 *Fī waqti dukhūlih*; this nicely translates Msyr's Syriac phrase 'am hoy d-'all' at the moment he entered'.

920 According to Tabari, 3.113, he clapped his hands together as a sign to the guards to kill Abu Muslim.

921 As above (see n. 915), *Chron 1234* has 'Abu Salim' here and in the next but one sentence, but the author is confused and one should read 'Abu Muslim'.

{**Rebels against the Abbasids**: Agapius: One of the commanders of Abu Muslim was a man called Shayba.<sup>922</sup> He was a Zoroastrian whom Abu Muslim had advanced into his entourage and he was living in Azerbaijan expecting the coming of Abu Muslim. When he heard of the killing of Abu Muslim he rebelled and resolved to avenge him. He came to Rayy and offered a corruption of the ideas of Zoroastrians, Daylamites,<sup>923</sup> Indians and others and they became his followers. Word of him reached Abu Ja'far, who dispatched to him a man called Jahwar. When he reached Rayy he engaged him (Shayba) there and the Zoroastrian was defeated. He (Jahwar) killed all the Zoroastrians who followed him, some 50,000 men, and he seized their families and their possessions. He took the oath of allegiance from the people of Rayy on behalf of Abu Ja'far Mansur, but when he had done that he remained in his place and did not return to Mansur. So Mansur sent to him Ibn al-Ash'ath who defeated and killed him and all his followers.<sup>924</sup>

Mansur sent Musa ibn Ka'b to Sind and its environs, where he encountered a rebel called Asbagh ibn Dawud.<sup>925</sup> He defeated him and killed him and all his followers. He took the oath of allegiance from the Arabs and others who were there, appointed a governor over the region and then returned. This was in the year 137 of the Arabs (754–55).

A Harurite called Mulabbad<sup>926</sup> revolted in Mesopotamia. A number of

922 He would seem to be the Sunbadh of the Muslim sources (perhaps Shayba was the name he took when he joined Abu Muslim's army, for which at least nominal conversion to Islam was necessary), who revolted at Rayy, preached a syncretic Zoroastrian–Muslim message, and was defeated by Jahwar ibn Marrar al-'Ijli (e.g. Tabari, 3.119–20; Ibn Khayyat, 442; see *El*, 'Sunbadh'). Elias of Nisibis, 174, says that the 'Sons of Shabur' mustered 50,000 men and sought revenge for Abu Muslim, but they were defeated by Jahwar son of Marrar (AH 137/AG 1065/754).

923 Inhabitants of Daylam, the province on the south-west side of the Caspian Sea (see n. 15 above). They were probably mostly Zoroastrian at this time, but in any case few of them had as yet converted to Islam, and hence their inclusion in the list here.

924 Jahwar's revolt, attested by coins (Miles, *Numismatic History*, 22–23), was quashed by Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath al-Khuza'i (Tabari, 3.122), one of the key leaders of the Abbasid revolution and later governor of Damascus and subsequently of Egypt for Mansur. See Crone, *Slaves*, 184–85, and Agha, *Revolution*, 361.

925 Musa ibn Ka'b, a prominent Abbasid leader and general, was indeed sent as governor to Sind (roughly equivalent to modern west Pakistan) according to Muslims sources, but they only mention his battle against the rebel Mansur ibn Jumhur al-Kalbi (Ibn Khayyat, 441; Ya'qubi, 2.429). Asbagh ibn Dawud is otherwise unattested.

926 This is Mulabbad ibn Harmala al-Shaybani, who managed to defeat a number of Abbasid generals sent against him by Mansur (Tabari, 3.120, 122–24; Ibn Khayyat, 444) until being defeated by one of the greatest of early Abbasid military leaders, Khazim ibn Khuzayma al-Tamimi (Crone, *Slaves*, 180–81; Agha, *Revolution*, 357).



the Khurasanis accepted him, which alarmed 'Abdallah Mansur and made matters difficult for him. When he (the Harurite) drew near to Mosul, 'Abdallah Mansur sent to him Khazim ibn Huzayma, who defeated and killed him and his followers, and then returned.

'Abdallah Mansur had entrusted Khurasan to a man called 'Abd al-Jabbar,<sup>927</sup> but he revolted, and this happened in the year 140 of the Arabs (757–58). He (Mansur) placed his son Muhammad<sup>928</sup> in charge of Khurasan and sent commanders and troops with him while the rebel 'Abd al-Jabbar was at Merw.<sup>929</sup>

#### King Constantine attacks Theodosiopolis<sup>930</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: Constantine, king of the Romans, attacked Theodosiopolis (Qaliquala), captured it and enslaved its people.

MSyr: Constantine, king of the Romans, advanced against Theodosiopolis of the Armenians, which the Armenians themselves call Garno Gagak,<sup>931</sup> the Arabs Erzerum and the Romans Qaloniqala. He captured it, enslaved its people and left it deserted. He placed a garrison in the fort of Kamak and returned to Constantinople.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### Salih ibn 'Ali raids Roman territory<sup>932</sup>

Theophanes: He (Salih ibn 'Ali) invaded the Roman country with a force of

927 Tabari, 3.134–36 (AH 141 or 142/7559–60); Ya'qubi, 2.445–46. See *El*, 'Abd al-Jabbar b. 'Abd al-Rahman'.

928 Muhammad al-Madhi, the third Abbasid caliph; he reigned AH 158–69/775–85. See *El*, 'al-Mahdi'.

929 Agapius, 537–39. Note that Agapius cuts short the last notice, about the rebel 'Abd al-Jabbar, to talk about a rebellion in Jurjan (see below), or perhaps his text has become disordered in the course of its transmission.

930 Agapius, 538; MSyr 11.XXV, 473/521. Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 175 (AH 140/AG 1068).

931 Or more accurately Karno K'aghak'. *El*, 'Erzurum', says that the Arabic name Qaliquala (and presumably the form Qaloniqala that *Chron 1234* gives) derives from the Armenian name.

932 Theophanes, 430; Agapius, 538. Cf. Tabari, 3.121–22; Ibn Khayyat, 444 (AH 138/755–56). Ibn Khayyat, 444, mentions a battle between Constantine, with 100,000 troops, and Salih ibn 'Ali, in AH 138/755–56, but this may be a different encounter.

80,000 and, when he had come to Cappadocia, he heard that Constantine was taking up arms against him. Taking fright, he returned empty-handed without causing any damage, except that he took a few Armenians with him who had joined him.

Agapius: Salih ibn 'Ali raided the Romans with troops of Arabs and Persians. Then he left without having achieved anything. He brought out a tribe of Armenians and Alans whom the Romans had sent out from Armenia with Kushan, their patriarch, and he settled them in Syria. From that day the kings of the Romans forbade any Armenians to be settled in their realm, especially in places near the borderlands.

Dionysius: not recorded

#### (757) Abu Ja'far rebuilds Melitene and Theodosiopolis<sup>933</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: Abdallah Mansur ordered that Melitene be rebuilt, which had been destroyed by the kings of the Romans, and that hostels be erected in it to serve as residences for (Muslim) raiders. | 'Abdallah Mansur ordered that Theodosiopolis (Qaliquala) be rebuilt, which had been destroyed by the kings of the Romans, and that garrisons and roads be established in it.

MSyr: Abu Ja'far ordered that Melitene be rebuilt as before and he stationed troops there. He also ordered Theodosiopolis of the Armenians to be rebuilt and established a garrison there.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

#### (760) Africa is subdued<sup>934</sup>

Theophanes: In Africa there was disorder and war following an eclipse of the sun on 15 August, a Saturday, at the tenth hour (correct for AD 760).

933 Agapius, 538 | 539; MSyr 11.XXV, 473–74/522. On the rebuilding of Melitene see *Chron Zuqnin*, 222 (AG 1072/760–61); Ibn Khayyat, 445 (AH 140/757–58); Tabari, 3.125 (AH 139/756–57).

934 Theophanes, 431; Agapius, 539; MSyr 11.XXIV, 474/522 (AG 1071/759–60). The reference is to the reconquest of (north-west) Africa by Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath al-Khuza'i, governor of Egypt (141–43/758–60), in AH 143/760, after a revolt by the sub-sect of the Kharijites known as the Ibadis, led by, among others, Abu l-Khattab 'Abd al-A'la ibn al-Samh al-Ma'afiri (Ibn Khayyat, 447, 464; Ya'qubi, 2.464).



Agapius: (Muhammad ibn) al-Ash'ath attacked Africa, conquered it and took the oath of allegiance from its people.<sup>935</sup>

MSyr: The Arabs subdued Africa.<sup>936</sup>

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

### The Arabs conquer Tabaristan<sup>937</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: A rebel called al-Hasan ibn Harran<sup>938</sup> rose up in Jurjan, which is surrounded by seas and mountains; to the west of it is Daylam and to the south of it is Azerbaijan. Its entrances are difficult and its roads narrow and hard to access. It is forty parasangs (*ca.* 100 km) in length from east to west along the sea coast, and twenty parasangs (*ca.* 50 km) in breadth from north to south. It has extensive, long, broad meadows, abundant springs, dense trees and numerous fruits. It has five cities, each with two or three walls. It has a number of forts on the high mountain peaks. Its inhabitants have very delicate bodies, are very beautifully coloured and very skilled in crafts. They are a numerous people and the name of their leader<sup>939</sup> at that time was Kurshib...<sup>940</sup>

MSyr: The country called Tabaristan has for its borders: to the north the

935 Earlier Agapius, 532, notes: 'A man of Quraysh, named Habib, revolted in Africa (in the time of Mansur) and took control of it, killing its governor.' This most likely refers to 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Habib al-Fihri, who was the last Umayyad governor of north-west Africa and held the post into the Abbasid period until running foul of Mansur in 137/755. See *EI*, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Habib b. Abi 'Ubayda'.

936 A little further on MSyr (11.XXVI, 476/526) notes that again 'the Africans revolted and killed the Arabs and the Persians', whereupon Abu Ja'far sent a certain Yazid, who 'pacified all of Africa', in the process killing 30,000 Berbers. This refers to Yazid ibn Hatim al-Muhallabi's campaign in AH 154–55/771–72 (MSyr says 'about this time', between notices relating to AG 1080/768–69 and 1083/771–72), which Tabari, 3.372–73, says was against Kharijites.

937 Agapius, 538–42; MSyr 11.XXV, 474/522. The two chronicles evidently have a common source at this point, though they disagree on which region is being conquered, Jurjan (Agapius) or Tabaristan (MSyr). The Muslim sources speak about Tabaristan and it may be that Agapius' first sentence is corrupt, and he should have said Tabaristan 'to the east of it is Jurjan', as in MSyr.

938 Unidentified.

939 *Ispahbadh*: the Persian word for a chief of the army.

940 Agapius goes on to give a very long account of this leader's heroic attempt to maintain the independence of his kingdom against the Abbasids, whereas MSyr makes do with the laconic observation that 'the Arabs subdued this country too'. This is the Khurshid of Muslim sources, who ruled Tabaristan AH 123–44/740–61 (see *EI*, 'Khurshid').

Caspian Sea; to the east Hyrcania,<sup>941</sup> which is Jurjan; to the south Media and a part of Parthia; to the west the Daylamites. It is a country of high mountains, woods and forests; its paths are steep and its passes very difficult. Its length from east to west is forty parasangs, and its breadth from north to south is twenty parasangs. It has numerous fine plains and valleys and all sorts of trees. It has five cities, each surrounded by a wall. The Arabs subdued this country too.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

### A comet appears in the sky<sup>942</sup>

Theophanes: A very bright comet appeared for ten days in the east and another twenty-one days in the west.

Agapius: A comet appeared; it was in Aries, in front of the sun, when the sun was in Taurus. It travelled until it came right under the rays of the sun, then it went behind it and remained for forty days.

MSyr: In the month of May there appeared a comet in front of the sun, in Aries, when the sun was in Taurus. It resembled a column. Its emission extended towards the south. It travelled a little ahead of the sun for twenty days; it was under the rays of the sun for three days; then it was behind the sun for forty days. Because of this apparition terror gripped the whole world.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

### (762) Abu Ja'far Mansur builds Baghdad<sup>943</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: 'Abdallah Mansur built a city on the Tigris above Ctesiphon (Mada'in); he called it the city of peace, settled it and transferred his court to it.

MSyr: Abu Ja'far built on the Tigris, above Ctesiphon, a city which he

941 The Greek name for the Iranian province on the south-east side of the Caspian Sea, taken from the Old Persian name Verkana, which underlies the Arabic name for the province and the modern name of the city (Gorgan).

942 Theophanes, 431; Agapius, 542; MSyr 11.XXV, 474–75/524.

943 Agapius, 542; MSyr 11.XXV, 474/522 (AG 1073/761–62); *Chron 1234*, 340 (AG 1073). This is, as one would expect, narrated at length in Muslim sources; see *EI*, 'Baghdad'. *Medinat al-Salam* 'City of Peace' was its official name.



called Baghdad and he made it his seat.<sup>944</sup>

*Chron 1234: Abu Ja'far built on the Tigris, above Ctesiphon, a city which he called Baghdad; he went across and he made it his seat.*

**(762–63) The revolt of Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah (the Pure Soul)<sup>945</sup>**

Theophanes: Fatima's son was killed. | The inhabitants of the desert and of Basra rebelled against 'Abdallah under the leadership of two brothers, against whom he sent (an army) and killed them along with 80,000 soldiers.

Agapius: A descendant of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib revolted and called himself the saviour. A band of Arabs joined him, but 'Abdallah Mansur sent someone who killed him and put to death his followers. | A rebel descended from Fatima rose up at Medina; he was called Muhammad and was a descendant of Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn 'Abi Talib. The people pledged allegiance to him. 'Abdallah Mansur dispatched to him his cousin 'Isa ibn Musa, together with Humayd (ibn Qahtaba) al-Ta'i,<sup>946</sup> and many troops, and he killed him and his followers. He took his head and carried it to Abu Ja'far. 'Abdallah (Mansur) had already left his city and travelled to 'Aqula. He encamped there until the news came to him of the killing of the rebel and the removal of his head. He only did that out of fear that the people of Kufa would turn against him, because they, together with the people of Basra and the surrounding regions, had pledged their allegiance to the rebel called Ibrahim. The latter arrived at Basra and took its people's pledge of allegiance; they united on the basis of fighting 'Abdallah Mansur. When he (Ibrahim) learned of the killing of his brother (Muhammad), he set off with numerous troops, heading for Abu

944 Dionysius adds: 'He also built a city next to Callinicum, which he called Rafiqa. The workmanship of its gates was of a style never seen before'. *Chron 1234* continues: 'These gates, which were amazing for their size and for the metalworking on them, came to stand, after the destruction of Rafiqa, at the entrance to Callinicum, until the present day.'

945 Theophanes, 432 | 433 (the first notice might be unrelated); Agapius, 539 | 542–43 (the first notice might relate to a different rebel); MSyr 11.XXV, 474/522 (AH 174/762–63). The revolt continued under the leadership of Ibrahim, Muhammad's brother; both were descendants of the caliph 'Ali via his son Hasan (rather than Husayn). This is another event that is narrated at great length in Muslim sources; see *EI*, 'Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah b. al-Hasan'; Elad, 'The Rebellion of Muhammad b. 'Abdallah'.

946 The text has al-Tusi. A Hamid al-Tusi was chief of police for Mansur according to Dhahabi, 6.401, but it seems certain that the senior Khurasani commander, Huamayd ibn Qahtaba al-Ta'i, is meant here; see Crone, *Slaves*, 188, and Agha, *Revolution*, 351.

Ja'far, and approached 'Aqula. When only fifteen parasangs separated him from Abu Ja'far, 'Isa ibn Musa went out to him with numerous troops and defeated him and killed all his followers. Ibrahim fled, for he had not been killed in the battle. Then 'Isa ibn Musa pursued him, caught up with him, killed him and brought his head to Abu Ja'far. With his death the wars and troubles subsided.

MSyr: A man called Muhammad revolted against Abu Ja'far. He was from Yathrib and descended from Fatima, the daughter of their prophet, and 'Ali, his cousin. The whole nation of the Arabs were drawn to him until the general 'Isa came and killed him in Yathrib, the city of the messenger.<sup>947</sup>

*Chron 1234: not recorded*

**(762–63) The Khazars make an incursion<sup>948</sup>**

Theophanes: The Turks went out of the Caspian Gates,<sup>949</sup> killed many people in Armenia, took many captives and returned home. | The Turks went forth again to the Caspian Gates and to Iberia; they fought the Arabs and there were many casualties on both sides.

Agapius: The Khazars raided Gurzan,<sup>950</sup> Lazica and all the Alan Gates.<sup>951</sup> They took prisoner some 50,000 Arabs together with many possessions and livestock. Musa ibn Ka'b engaged them in battle, but they defeated him and killed all his men.

MSyr: The Khazars made a raid and took prisoner 50,000 men of the Gurzaye.<sup>952</sup>

947 This sentence uses the Arabic technical terms *umma* (written in Syriac as *ūmtā*), meaning nation/community, and *rasūl* (written in Syriac as *rasūlā*), meaning messenger, the most common way to designate the prophet Muhammad.

948 Theophanes, 433; Agapius, 543–44; MSyr 11.XXV, 474/522 (AG 1074/762–63). The notice in Agapius is undated, but the previous notice concerned year 9 of Mansur/762–63. Tabari, 3.318 (AH 145/762–63) and 3.328 (AH 147/764–65), records two Khazars attacks against the Muslims at this time, which resulted in the killing and capture of many Muslims by the Caspian Gates and the region of Armenia.

949 See n. 105 above; again, probably the Dariel Pass is meant, north of Tiflis (Tbilisi), rather than the passes in the region south-east of the Caspian Sea, the original location designated as the Caspian Gates.

950 Written *hrwn*; Gurzan would only require a minor emendation and is an apt location (see n. 479 above).

951 See nn. 105 and 949 above.

952 Or Gurzanaye, that is, inhabitants of Gurzan, in the Caucasus; see n. 479 above.



*Chron* 1234: not recorded

### The Arabs capture Kabul<sup>953</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: The Arabs conquered one of the districts of Hind<sup>954</sup> called Kabul.

MSyr: The region of Kabul, of the land of Hind, was subjected to the Arabs.

*Chron* 1234: not recorded

### Abu Ja'far Mansur treats the Christians harshly<sup>955</sup>

Theophanes: Salih (ibn 'Ali) decreed that no new churches should be built, that crosses should not be displayed and that Christians should not discourse with Arabs on matters of religion. | 'Abdallah (Mansur) intensified the taxation of Christians so much so that he imposed tax on all monks, solitaires and stylites who led lives pleasing to God. He also put under seals the treasuries of churches and brought Jews to sell their contents, which were bought by freedmen. | The Arabs maliciously expelled the Christians from government chanceries for a short time, but were once again obliged to entrust the same duties to them because they were unable to write numerals.<sup>956</sup> | 'Abdallah ordered that Christians and Jews should be marked on their hands.<sup>957</sup>

953 Agapius, 544 ('in the tenth year of Mansur's reign' /763–64); MSyr 11.XXV, 474–75/522. Tabari, 3.369, records a raid of Humayd ibn Qahtaba against Kabul in AH 152/769, but this does not agree with Agapius' date.

954 The term Hind is used in early Muslim sources in a general sense to mean that part of the Indian subcontinent (including portions of modern eastern Afghanistan, north-east Pakistan, Kashmir and Tibet) that neighboured the Islamic Empire, but was not under Muslim control. At this time Kabul, in modern eastern Afghanistan, was not held by the Muslims.

955 Theophanes, 430 | 430 | 431; Agapius, 546; MSyr 11.XXVI, 476–77/526–27; *Chron* 1234, 340. Again Theophanes has a very different account except for the remark about heavy taxation. Ya'qubi, 2.466, notes that Mansur 'took the wealth of people to such a degree that he left no one with any surplus'.

956 The point about numerals has been made by Theophanes before; see n. 546 above.

957 Cf. *Chron Zuqnin*, 268 and 291–92, on the branding and stamping of people in Mesopotamia, which was for the purpose of registering people and ensuring/recording that they had paid their taxes. See Robinson, 'Neck-sealing'.

Agapius: Mansur set out with all his troops and travelled to Mesopotamia and stayed there a few days. Then he crossed the Euphrates and came to Palestine.<sup>958</sup> He treated all the people harshly and imposed on them troubles and exactions such as no king had done before. He placed them in difficult straits until no one remained – not even labourers, serving boys, porters, gravediggers, peasants, beggars or any type of person – whom he did not subject to tax and, take from their wealth. People's tribulations increased and they became so hard pressed that some of them excavated graves, exhumed bodies, cooked and ate them. Dogs were slaughtered, roasted and sold in the markets. Silver coin disappeared from the hands of men and they met with such trials as cannot be described. And to make things even worse bouts of plague carried them off.

MSyr:<sup>959</sup> In the year AG 1083 (771–72) Abu Ja'far left Babylon for Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. He appointed over Mesopotamia the Jew **Musa ibn Mus'ab**,<sup>960</sup> and at Qinnasrin Musa ibn Sulayman: both cruel and wicked men. He gathered all the silver and gold into his treasury with the result that one did not see a gold or silver coin except with merchants. Out of need **people** were reduced to **digging up the graves** of the dead and sieving the earth in them. They would clean off the dirt with water and would find **gold** or **silver** or other precious minerals which they gave for their taxes. While people were in this situation, their torment further increased, for there was a terrible disease that attacked the head and one very rapidly died of it. This malady then spread all over Syria, Mesopotamia and Assyria. And there was an oppressive **famine**, not for reason of a lack of wheat, but for the reason that no one had a silver coin left: there was no work for the poor and the churches and monasteries had been despoiled and the houses plundered. The price of **a bull or a donkey was a whole silver coin**, as also for five measures of **wheat** or ten litres of wine; boys and girls would fetch five silver coins.

958 Tabari, 3.372, has Mansur go to Jerusalem in AH 154/771 (see Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 40). This entry in Agapius is undated, but the previous entry related to the fifteenth year of Mansur/768–69. Amitai-Preiss, 'What happened in 155/772', discusses a number of seals with this date and argues that they relate to extraordinary taxes that were levied by Mansur to pay for his extensive building projects, such as Raqqa.

959 Earlier MSyr (11.XXV, 475/522) notes: 'Abu Ja'far imposed harsh taxes of all kinds on all peoples everywhere. On all the Christians he increased the tribute twofold.'

960 According to Muslim sources he was made governor of Mesopotamia in AH 155/772 (Crone, *Slaves*, 186); he is not to be confused with Musa ibn Ka'b, who had served as deputy governor of Mesopotamia in AH 132/749–50. The harshness of Musa ibn Mus'ab's rule is described at great length by *Chron Zuqnin*, 289–319 (AG 1084/772–73), and is commented on by Cahen, 'Fiscalités'.



*Chron 1234*: Abu Ja'far appointed over **Mosul Musa ibn Mus'ab**, a wicked and merciless man, and an enemy of the Christians. He thought up torments which the world had never seen before. He increased tribute and multiplied exactions. He attached lead seals to men's necks and cut off the thumbs of their hands. He demanded tax<sup>961</sup> even for windows and doors with the result that **people were digging up old graves** to extract **gold and silver**. In addition, there was a great **famine** and pestilence in his days. Men were perishing (so fast) that there was no one to do the burying. Wolves went about and devoured many men. One had to pay **a whole silver coin for a donkey or a bull** or three or four sheep or two or three handfuls of **wheat**, for this harsh famine was (everywhere) in the world.

(767) A Zoroastrian revolt in Iran<sup>962</sup>

Theophanes: not recorded

Agapius: The Zoroastrians in Khurasan mutinied and threw off allegiance to 'Abdallah Mansur. The reason for this was that in one of the districts of Khurasan, called Badghis,<sup>963</sup> there was a mountain from which much silver was extracted. 30,000 workers were employed exclusively in extracting this metal and refining it. The labourers in it were Zoroastrians and the mountain had been granted to them as a concession. They had discovered a lode in it of great worth and the (local) potentate wanted to remove the mountain from their possession and hand it over to someone else. They refused that and he struck one of them. They attacked him and killed many of his men. He wrote to Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah Mansur (Mahdi) to inform him about them. He (Mahdi) was resident at Rayy and he dispatched to him 34,000 soldiers. He (the local potentate) made them his vanguard and went up with 30,000 of his own soldiers in search of them (the Zoroastrians). The people in his vanguard reached the mountain, in which were the mines and the

<sup>961</sup> *Gzūā*: from the Arabic word *jizya*, which can be used specifically to designate poll-tax (then sometimes called *jizyat al-ra's*) or to refer to other taxes (e.g. *jizyat al-ard'* 'land tax'), or to taxes in general.

<sup>962</sup> Agapius, 544–45 (year 14 of Mansur/767–68); MSyr 11.XXV, 475/522–23 (AG 1080/768–69). Cf. Elias of Nisibis, 180–81 (AH 153/AG 1081/770). This must refer to the rebellion in eastern Iran of Ustadhsis, who defeated a number of Muslim generals before being finally defeated by Khazim ibn Khuzayma. Cf. Tabari, 3.354–58 (AH 150/767); Ya'qubi, 2.457–58; and see *EI*, 'Ustadhsis'.

<sup>963</sup> In roughly the same area as Badghis province in modern west Afghanistan.

Zoroastrians. They did battle with them, but the Zoroastrians defeated them and killed most of them. The defeat of his men reached Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah. He stayed where he was and wrote to 'Abdallah Mansur a letter telling him about the affair of the Zoroastrians and the mines. He was then at a place called Arfasir<sup>964</sup> and wintered there. When winter had passed, he dispatched against the Zoroastrians a man named Khazim with 40,000 soldiers. When he reached them, he engaged them in battle and defeated them. He killed some 20,000 men and enslaved the survivors, conveying them to Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah, who was encamped by the Tigris, opposite Baghdad.

MSyr: Some Zoroastrians in Persia set up a leader for themselves and revolted against the Arabs. An army of Arabs was sent against them, but they were defeated. The Zoroastrians were able to establish a kingdom. The Arabs went again with a stronger army and this time the Zoroastrians were defeated. 40,000 of their men perished and their chief was killed. Their plans came to nought and they were once again subject to the Arabs.

*Chron 1234*: not recorded

<sup>964</sup> This is how Vasiliev reads it; possibly one should read Ardashir, that is, the city of Ardashir (Ardashir Khurra, ancient Gur and modern Firuzabad), in south central Iran.



## APPENDIX 1

### UNIQUE NOTICES\* IN THEOPHANES ABOUT AFFAIRS IN SYRIA AND PALESTINE

As noted in the introduction to this volume, Theophanes' *Chronographia* contains a lot of material on events in Palestine and Syria that is not found anywhere else. Only the first six notices relate to the period before 740. The rest, being the majority, concern the years 740–80 and possibly reflect the work of a continuator of the 'eastern source' or of Theophilus' chronicle, who was active in Palestine or Syria. The subject matter tends to concern either affairs of the Chalcedonian church in the Levant or events internal to the Muslim regime, about which the author would appear to have quite detailed knowledge, and possibly derives from more than one source. I list all these unique notices here so as to give the reader an idea of the nature of this supplementary material.

Theophanes, 335–36: The battle between the Arabs and the *vicarius* Theodore at Mothous near the Dead Sea *ca.* 633 (quoted in full above).

348: 'Thomarichos, bishop of Apamea, died and the bishop of Hims was burned.'

365: 'Abd al-Malik (685–705) ordered the rebuilding of the temple of Mecca and wanted to remove the columns of Gethsemane (quoted in full above).

382: 'George, the bishop of Apamea, was transferred to Martyropolis.'<sup>1</sup>

404: 'The camels of the premier<sup>2</sup> were burned at St Elijah's.'<sup>3</sup>

410: 'Theodore son of Mansur was banished to the desert regions.'<sup>4</sup>

\* That is, notices not found in any other of TC's dependants, or indeed in any other source at all.

1 Syriac: Mayferqat; *see* translation, n. 32 above.

2 Meaning the Muslim caliph, but using the term *prōtosymbolos*; *see* translation, n. 447 above.

3 Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 561, suggest this is a reference to the monastery of the patriarch Elias at Jericho.

4 Perhaps the brother of Sergius son of Mansur, who served in the Muslim treasury about the same time (*see* the notice on 'Abd al-Malik builds in Mecca' above).

412: 'Markets in Damascus were burned by the Iraqis, who were put to the gallows.'<sup>5</sup>

416: The caliph Hisham (724–43) befriends a Syrian monk called Stephen, whom he allows the Christians to appoint as patriarch of Antioch (quoted in full above).

421: An Ethiopian is dispatched by the caliph Marwan II (744–50) to kill 'Abbas ibn Walid, who is in prison in Damascus (quoted in full above).

426: Marwan II destroyed the walls of all the prominent cities of Syria except Antioch, which he planned to use as a refuge, and he belonged to the heresy of the Epicureans, which he had imbued from the pagans who dwell at Harran (quoted in full above).

427: 'The inhabitants of Chalcis rose up against the Persian wearers-of-black and 4000 of them were killed in the territory of Hims.'

429: 'Nicetas of Baalbek (Heliopolis) was anathematised by the whole Church.'

430: 'In this year (AD 756), on 9 March, there occurred a considerable earthquake in Palestine and Syria.'<sup>6</sup>

430: 'Theodore, patriarch of Antioch, was exiled because of the malice of the Arabs, having been accused of frequently communicating Arab affairs by letter to King Constantine. And so Salih (ibn 'Ali) himself banished him to the land of Moab, which was his native country.'

430: 'The same year (AD 757–58) some of the Persian wearers-of-black who were of the Magian religion were deceived by the devil. After selling their possessions they went up naked on the walls and threw themselves down, believing that they would fly up to heaven. But having no appreciable share of the heavenly kingdom, they returned to earth and broke their limbs. The leaders of their error, who were sixteen in number, were put to death at Aleppo (Beroia) and Chalcis by 'Abdallah acting through Salih.'

431: 'In the same year (AD 759–60) the head of St John the Forerunner and Baptist was translated from the monastery of the Cave to his splendid church in the city of Hims and a crypt was built, wherein to this day it is worshipped

<sup>5</sup> This is dated to 740, the year of the revolt of the 'Alid Zayd ibn 'Ali (*see* above) and the Iraqis mentioned here, presumably resident in Damascus, may have been demonstrating their support for Zayd.

<sup>6</sup> Possibly the same as that recorded by *Chron Zuqnin*, 216, for 3 March AG 1067/756.



by the faithful and honoured with both material and spiritual incense while it pours cures upon all who come to it in a spirit of faith.'

431: 'A certain Theodore, a Lebanese Syrian, rose up against the Arabs in the territory of Baalbek, which adjoins the Lebanon, and fought them. Many were killed on both sides. In the end he was routed and fled and all his Lebanese companions were slain.'

431: 'Some of the wearers-of-black rose up at Dabik (Dabekon)<sup>7</sup> proclaiming the caliph's son to be a god inasmuch as he was their provider,<sup>8</sup> a doctrine they made public. The wearers-of-black entered the house of their error and killed the key-bearers, who numbered sixty. Some of them went forth to Basra, took many captives and a big sum of money.'

432: 'In this year (AD 760–61) the Qaysites<sup>9</sup> rebelled against the wearers-of-black on account of their women, for a number of them (the wearers-of-black) lived in a house in which three (Qaysite) brothers also dwelt and they wanted to drown their wives. So the three brothers rose up, killed them and buried them. Their companions assembled and killed the rest. Then Salih (ibn 'Ali)<sup>10</sup> sent out his troops, who came upon them by deceit, captured them, hanged the three brothers and killed many others. On the feast of Easter he entered the church during holy service and, as the metropolitan was standing by and saying loudly the words "For Thy people and Thy church entreat Thee", they took him out and confined him in a prison, and another completed the holy service. There ensued great fear. Had not the metropolitan assuaged him by means of tactful behaviour and humble words, great evil would have been done at that time. It was the most blessed Anastasius.'

7 North of modern Aleppo, near a large plain that was commonly used for stationing troops.

8 This is probably connected with the riot in the late 750s of the Rawandiyya, who, according to Tabari (3.129–30), marched around the caliph Mansur's palace in Iraq hailing him as their god who provided them with food and drink. *see EI*, 'al-Rawandiyya'.

9 Kasiotai; a gloss in one of the manuscripts explains that these were members of the tribal group of Qays (Kaēs), whom Theophanes elsewhere refers to as Kaisinoi. Because the story implies that the Kasiotai were Christian, Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, 598, presumably assuming that all Arabs are Muslims, suggest that they were rather inhabitants of Mount Kasios near Antioch. Since many Arab tribes remained Christian until at least the ninth century such a revision is unnecessary. The story remains, however, somewhat obscure.

10 Presumably this is who is meant, though here Theophanes writes Selichos, rather than Salim.

433: 'A certain Cosmas surnamed Komanites,<sup>11</sup> bishop of Hama (Epiphaneia), in the region of Apamea in Syria, on being accused by the citizens of Hama before Theodore, patriarch of Antioch, concerning the alienation of sacred objects, and being unable to make them good, renounced the orthodox faith and gave his adherence to Constantine's heresy against the holy icons. By common consent, Theodore, patriarch of Antioch, Theodore of Jerusalem and Cosmas of Alexandria, together with their suffragan bishops, unanimously anathematised him on the day of holy Pentecost after the reading of the holy Gospel, each in his own city.'

435–36: 'As for 'Abdallah (Mansur), he used the following ruse to remove from power 'Isa ibn Musa who, as we have said above, had received the third lot of ruling after him. Observing him to suffer from a migraine on one side of his head, which filled him with dizziness, he persuaded him that he would be cured if he were injected in the nose with a sneezing drug that was prepared by his physician, a certain Moses – a deacon of the church of Antioch – whom he had already bribed to concoct a very strong medicine that would also act as a potent narcotic. Thus convinced by 'Abdallah, the same 'Isa, even though he took precautions not to eat with him for fear of a plot, accepted the nose medicine. Having had the regions of his head injected and been deprived of his senses and his reasoning faculties, he lay speechless. Then 'Abdallah called in the leaders and prominent men of their race and said: "What do you think about your future king?" They unanimously repudiated him and pledged themselves to the son of the same 'Abdallah, (namely) Muhammad, surnamed Mahdi. As for 'Isa, they conveyed him to his house, senseless as he was. Three days later, when he had recovered, 'Abdallah consoled him with feigned excuses and repaid the injury with 100 talents of gold.'

439: 'In this year (AD 765–66)... the Harurites, as they are called among the Arabs – which means zealots<sup>12</sup> – rebelled in the desert of Palmyra.'

444: 'In this year (AD 768–69) an exchange of prisoners took place in Syria, a man for a man and a woman for a woman and a child likewise for a child. 'Abdallah ordered that their beards (i.e. of the male captives) should be shaved and that they should wear hats one and half cubits high.'

11 That is, a native of Komana, either the one in Pontus (on the south shore of the Black Sea) or the one a little to the south-west in Armenia I, in the region of Sebasteia (modern Sivas) in north-east Turkey.

12 See translation, n. 375 above and Conrad, 'Theophanes', 31.



446: 'Abdallah went to Jerusalem for his fast<sup>13</sup> and ordered that Christians and Jews should be marked on their hands. Many Christians fled to the Roman country by sea.'

447: 'In this year (AD 773–74) 280 heads were brought from Africa and paraded in Syria.'<sup>14</sup>

451: 'In this year (AD 776–77) Thoumamas, son of Baka, invaded the Roman country and returned after taking captives. In this year (AD 777–78) Thoumamas established himself at Dabik and raised a rebellion.'<sup>15</sup>

452: 'In this year (AD 779–80) Mahdi (Madi), the leader of the Arabs, came to Dabik with a great armed force and sent his son Harun (Aaron) against the Roman country while he himself returned to the Holy City.<sup>16</sup> He sent out Mouchesias, surnamed the Zealot,<sup>17</sup> and gave him authority to convert the slaves of Christians and to ruin the holy churches.<sup>18</sup> This man came as far as Hims and announced that he would not oblige anyone except former infidels to become Muslim, anticipating the Jews and Christians to make themselves known. Then straight away he began torturing them in a godless manner, worse than Lysias and Agrikolaos of olden time,<sup>19</sup> and many of them he

13 The caliph 'Abdallah Mansur's journey to Palestine is recorded by Muslim sources; e.g. Tabari, 3.372.

14 Theophanes had noted the suppression of a rebellion in Africa in 760 (see the notice thereon in the translation above), but this presumably relates to a slightly later event (there were numerous minor revolts in Africa in the early Abbasid period).

15 This is Thumama ibn Walid ibn Qa'qa'. Cf. Ibn Khayyat, 430 and 437, and Tabari, 3.477 and 485 (AH 160 and 161/776–77 and 777–78); Crone, *Slaves*, 106. In a third notice on Thumama, Tabari, 3.493 (AH 161) says that 'he took charge of the summer campaign, but did not complete that'; he does not elucidate, but this could be related to Theophanes' claim of rebellion by Thumama.

16 I.e. Jerusalem; Elias of Nisibis, 184 (AH 163/779–80), reports the same events, but has Harun, not Mahdi, go to Jerusalem after the raid against the Byzantines.

17 Peeters, 'Glanures martyrologiques', 104–9, identifies this person with the Abbasid general Hasan ibn Qahtaba. Mouchesias, or Muchthesias in a Latin version, derives, says Peeters, from the Syriac participle *methshīg* 'washed, purified' and refers to the fact that Hasan once went to the baths in Dorylaion, Asia Minor, to cure himself of a skin disease, according to Muslim sources. Also Hasan was known as the serpent (*al-tanīn*), which in Syriac would be *tanīnā*, but, says Peeters, this was miswritten as *tanānā*, namely 'zealot', which explains why Theophanes describes Hasan thus. If this is correct, then this notice was originally composed in Syriac, which may mean that the continuation of TC was originally written in Syriac and only later translated into Greek for Theophanes.

18 Cf. *Ehresh Inscription*, s.a. AG 1091 (AD 779–80): 'The commander of the faithful, Mahdi, came and entered as far as (the river) Gihan (in southern Turkey) and he returned and ordered the churches to be pulled down and the tribe of Tanukh to adopt Islam.'

19 Legendary persecutors of martyrs in the time of the king Diocletian (285–305).

destroyed. By the grace of God his fury was vanquished by some women who were newly baptised, namely the wives of the archdeacon of Hims and of the sons of Esaias. These endured many torments, but did not yield to impiety; for each of them received a thousand lashes and was subjected to many other tortures and so obtained from Christ the crown of victory. The man went as far as Damascus and ruined many churches paying no heed to the promise that had been given to the Christians by the Arabs.'

Here the notices on Syro-Palestinian affairs in the chronicle of Theophanes come to an end. If they do come from George Syncellus (see the introduction to this volume for discussion) this may be because *ca.* 780 he returned from Palestine to Constantinople, where he served as the personal secretary to the patriarch Tarasius from 784 to 806.



## APPENDIX 2

### THE COMMON SOURCE OF TC AND *CHRON 819*: A CHRONICLE OF THE 730s

For the period *ca.* 640–730 *Chron 819* and TC have a number of notices that exhibit very similar wording and it has been argued that these shared notices derive from a common source, which was a short annalistic chronicle that went up to *ca.* 730.<sup>1</sup> Recently Andrew Palmer has argued that this common source was John of Litarb, a stylite monk and man of letters in early eighth-century northern Syria (see the introduction to this volume). To give some indication of the nature of this common source, I present here a translation of the notices in *Chron 819* that have clear textual affinities with the corresponding notice (given above) in one or more of TC's dependants.

*Chron 819*, 12: King 'Umar was killed by the Indian slave of a Qurayshite man while he was praying in the mosque (AG 955 = 643–44).

12: There was a violent earthquake and many places in Syria were destroyed. Batnan of Serug collapsed and was cast down and obliterated, as also was one side of the ancient church of Edessa. (It occurred) on the Sunday of the Resurrection at the third hour (AG 990 = 679).

13: 'Abd al-Malik made peace with the Romans for three years, paying them tribute every day of 1000 gold coins and one Arabian horse<sup>2</sup> (AG 996 = 685).

13: The Romans and their troops went out to the vale of Antioch and (Dinar son of Dinar) engaged them. He killed them and only a few (of them got away). They returned to Roman territory in disgrace (AG 1006).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brooks, 'Sources of Theophanes'. He was using *Chron 846*, since *Chron 819* had not yet then been published, but the two are almost identical for the period 640–730.

<sup>2</sup> TC's dependants all add to the list 'one slave'.

<sup>3</sup> *Chron 819* is defective here and the words in brackets are taken from *Chron 846*, 232, which is a continuation and expansion of *Chron 819*. Of TC's dependants only Msyr has this notice (11.XV, 446/470: 'In AG 1006 the Romans entered the vale of Antioch; an army of the Arabs engaged them and destroyed most of them while the rest fled'), which may mean that it was not in TC; if so, Msyr must have had direct access to the chronicle of *ca.* 730.

13: The Arabs struck gold and silver coins with no image on them, just letters (AG 1008 = 696–97).

13: 'Atiyya made a census of foreigners (AG 1009 = 697–98).

13–14: 'Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-Malik invaded (Roman territory) with a large army and he (re)built Mopsuestia in the land of Cilicia (AG 1015 = 703–4).

14: An order went out (from 'Abd al-Malik) that all pigs should be killed (AG 1015).

14: Walid became king; he was a crafty man and he increased exactions and tribulations more than all his predecessors (AG 1016 = 714–15).<sup>4</sup>

14: Shabib the Harurite was drowned in the Euphrates; he was a famous horseman and a heroic warrior.

14: He (Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik) assembled troops and invaded Roman territory. He besieged the fortress of Turanda and the cities of Amasiya and Mostiya. He destroyed them and brought back as captives all who were in them (AG 1021 = 709–10).

15: Maslama dispatched officials through the whole of Mesopotamia and they measured the lands and counted the vineyards, crops, animals and people; and he hung lead seals on the necks of everyone (AG 1022 = 710–11).<sup>5</sup>

15: On the 28<sup>th</sup> of the month of February, on the dawn of Tuesday, there was a violent earthquake in all the regions of Syria. It killed and buried people without number (AG 1024 = 712–13).

15: Sulayman assembled troops and cavalry and they set upon the sea and they laid siege to Asia. He captured two cities, Sardis and Pergamon,<sup>6</sup> and other fortified places. He killed many and led others into captivity (AG 1027 = 715–16). Sulayman also assembled troops at the meadow of Dabiq and dispatched a great army with the general 'Abida<sup>7</sup> to Roman territory. They entered and ravaged the land of Thrace. 'Abida entered the land of the Bulgars, but many of his troops were killed by them. The cunning king of the Romans

<sup>4</sup> The phrase 'he increased... his predecessors' is found with exactly the same wording in *Chron 1234*, 299. *Chron 819* adds: 'he completely wiped out robbers and bandits; and he built a city and called it 'Ayn Gara'.

<sup>5</sup> The phrase 'they measured... of everyone' is found with exactly the same wording in *Chron 1234*, 299.

<sup>6</sup> Recorded also by Msyr 11.XVIII, 452/483; Theophanes, 390, just mentions Pergamon.

<sup>7</sup> Or rather Sharahil ibn 'Abd ibn 'Abda; Dionysius also gets this name wrong.



harassed those that survived to the point that they had to eat the flesh and excrement of their animals (AG 1028 = 716–17).

15: 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (ibn Marwan became king for two years and seven months; he was a good man and a more compassionate king than all the kings) before him.<sup>8</sup>

16: Yazid (II) son of 'Atika<sup>9</sup> (and) son of 'Abd al-Malik became king after him ('Umar) for four years and he ordered that all the images in his empire, whether of bronze, wood or stone, or of paint, be completely destroyed.

16: Hisham built more in his realm than the kings before him – houses and fields and shops – and he diverted a river from the Euphrates to irrigate the plantations and the fields which he made near it.

16: There was a great pestilence among bulls, mares and all four-legged animals. There was a great plague in all the regions of Syria (AG 1036 = 724–25).

17: Maslama invaded Roman territory and captured Neo-Caesarea in Pontus; he laid waste and led off many captives into Syria (AG 1037 = 725–26).

<sup>8</sup> *Chron* 819 is defective here and the words in brackets are taken from *Chron* 846, 234; see n. 3 above.

<sup>9</sup> 'Atika was his mother's name; she was daughter of Yazid I. *Chron* 819 has probably not appreciated this and continues 'son of 'Abd al-Malik', as though Yazid was a grandson of 'Abd al-Malik, whereas he was actually one of his sons.

### APPENDIX 3

#### THE MISSING SECTIONS OF AGAPIUS FROM MS LAURENZIANA OR 323

In the preface to his edition of the second part of Agapius' *History*, which he made on the basis of the unique Florence manuscript (Bibliotheca Laurenziana Orientali 323), Vasiliev noted that, as well as being incomplete at the end, this manuscript contained 'some folios which, as a result of humidity, are completely illegible' (*Patrologia Orientalis* 7, 1911, 458). This particularly affects fols. 98v–100v, concerning the affair of Andrew and Shabur's messenger at the court of Mu'awiya, and fols. 104v–106v, on the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, which both Vasiliev (*PO* 8, 1912, 488 and 497) and Cheikho (*Agapius*, 350 and 355) say were stuck together and consequently 'could not be transcribed nor photographed' (*ibid.*, 350 n. 5). Shortly after I had submitted the manuscript of this book to Liverpool University Press, I happened to travel to Florence and thought I would take the opportunity to look at Ms Or 323. I discovered, to my surprise, that these folios were now separated and legible. The manuscript showed signs of restoration and presumably this had happened since the time of the two editions, which both appeared in 1912. There are still some parts that are difficult to read (indicated by a question mark in the text below), since the ink from the formerly stuck-together pages has run in some places and obscures Agapius' text, but for the most part it is clearly written. Since these sections have not been made available to scholars before, I reproduce them here, though I must emphasise that they are the result of copying by hand in a short time (a digital copy of the manuscript had apparently never been made), and they can only serve as a stopgap until such time as a new edition has been made of the whole text of the second part of Agapius' *History*. I am grateful to Alison Welsby of Liverpool University Press for allowing me to insert this appendix and its translation (in the relevant parts of the translation above) even though I had already submitted the manuscript.



فليحسن ظنك به أكثر من العبد فإن ذلك يجري مجرى الملوك وهذا يجري مجرى العبيد ولا ينبغي لك أن تتق بعبد لا يصلح لمولاه (100r) الذي اقتناه واصطنعه لأن من لم يصلح لذلك الصديق (?) لم يصلح للعدو والذي لم يعرفه قط. والكلب إذا لم يحفظ صاحبه الذي رباه وأطعمه وسقاه كيف يحفظ الغريب الذي لم يعرفه قط. والسبع إذا لم يحسن إلى والده الذي ولده ورباه فكيف يحسن إلى الإنسان الذي هو عدوه. فقال معاوية (sic) للخادم: انصرف إلى صاحبك بسلام فإنك صفر مما سألتنا. فقال الخادم: جزاك الله خيرا أيها الملك. وخرج من عنده واستوى على دابته وأخذ الطريق إلى ملطية لأن شابور كان في تخومها وتقدم إلى [...] يتبع مصالح الروم التي اجتاز بها بأخذ رسول شابور. ثم كتب إلى قسطنطوس يعرفه ما رد عليه معاوية وأمر معاوية أن يكتب إلى شابور بإجابته إلى ما سأل ووعده بأن يمدد بجيوش يقوي بها على محاربة ملك الروم وبكل ما يحب. وخرج رسول البطريق متوجها إلى صاحبه إلى أن صار إلى مدينة من مدائن الروم فأوى إلى خراب بالليل فلم يستقر أن أحاط به القوم فأخذوه وجميع من كان معه من أصحابه ووجهوا بهم إلى اندرا الخادم. فلما رأى رسول شابور الخادم خر له ساجدا على الأرض وسأله العفو (100v) عنه فأمر به الخادم فنزعت خصيبته وأمر بتعليقها على رأس قناة وأن يكتب عليها هذه نقمة اندرا خادم الملك لرسول شابور الخارجي...

وعلى أن جزيرة قبرس مشتركة بين الروم والعرب (104v) نصفين بينهما وتكون ارمينية غير مقسومة فيوجه كل واحد لصاحبه فيلتقيان فيها فأيهما غلب كانت ارمينية له وليس للمغلوب فيها شيء. فاتفقا على ذلك ثم وجه يوسطنيان إلى عبد الملك كاتباً له يدعاه بولي ليأخذ خطه بما اتفقا عليه ويشهد على نفسه العدول. فلما قدم فولى على عبد الملك أمر بإكرامه وكتب الخط بما اتفقا عليه وأشهد على نفسه فقها (ء) مملكته وقضاتها. وختم الكتاب ودفعه إلى فولاً (sic) وصرفه إلى صاحبه. وأزال يوسطنيان الروم الذين كانوا في جبل لبنان فبلغ عددهم اثنا عشر ألف رجل سوى النساء والصبيان. فلما أجرى الصلح وجه عبد الملك بن مروان عبيد الله بن زياد إلى المختار الكذاب فهزمه المختار وقتله وأصحابه فلما بلغ عبد الملك قتل عبيد الله نهض بنفسه وصار إلى الجزيرة يريد المختار. وكان يوسطنيان الملك قد وجه إلى ارمينية بطريقاً

(98v) وفي السنة الثانية عصا بطريق من بطارقة الروم يقال له شابور<sup>1</sup> وخرج على (99r) قسطنطوس وكان عريفاً على الأرمن الذين كانوا مع الملك. وكتب معاوية وظهر له أن يسلم إليه ملك الروم إن هو أعانه. فلما بلغ قسطنطوس أن شابور قد عصا وكتب العرب أرسل قسطنطوس إلى معاوية خادماً يقال له أندرا مع ألطاف كثيرة خوفاً من ميله مع شابور. فوافى رسل (sic) الملك دمشق فألفا رسول شابور بها وسمع توعد معاوية ملك الروم وضمائه لرسول الخارجي العضد والمعونة. فهال الخادم ذلك وكان خبر هذا الخادم منتشراً عند العرب بالبأس والنجدة والشدة فأمر معاوية بإدخال رسول شابور وإحضار الخادم بعد ذلك. فلما دخل رسول شابور وجلس أدخل الخادم فنظر إليه رسول شابور ففرغ منه وذعر من موافاته ثم قام فخر له ساجداً. فلما رأى معاوية ذلك قال له: يا ناقص الرأي لم فعلت هذا في مجلسي؟ إني أظنك جباناً ضعيفاً وصاحبك الذي وجهك أجبن وأضعف منك وأعجز إذ هالك أمر خادم قسطنطوس. فقال الرسول: أيها الملك إن العادة اضترتني إلى ذلك وإذا دامت العادة صارت طبيعة ثانية ولا هذا (?) كان رهبة ولا رعباً. ثم التفت معاوية إلى الخادم وسأله (99v) عن سبب قدمه. فقال إني قدمت من عند سيدي الملك لأعرف خبر هذا الجالس بين يديك وخبر صاحبه الذي وجه به إليك. فقال معاوية: إن أمركما واحد وكل واحد منكما عدو غير أني من وجدته فيكما يميل ميلنا ويعني بما عنانا فنحن له محبون وله ناصرون وبه معنيون. فإن كان صاحبك يوفر علينا الخراج ويخضع لنا ويطيعنا فنصرنا له مستعد وعوننا له<sup>2</sup> موجود. وإن أظهر هذا الخارج على صاحبك الطاعة والتوفير عليها فله نصر وإياه نعين وإن كان خارجاً على صاحبه. فقال الخادم: لعمرى أيها الملك إننا كلنا لك أعداء (ء) كما وصفت غير أنه لا سواء عندك العبد والحر. لا وقد (?) ينبغي أن يجري كل واحد منهما عندك مجراه الذي يليق به لأن الحر ليس كالعبد والحر يجري الأشياء عنده على قدر حرية وكرم نفسه والعبد يجري الأشياء عنده على قدر عبودته وشره نفسه وببذل نفسه لكل صنعة. فإن عاهدك صاحبي

1 The copyist is erratic in the use of diacritical marks so it is difficult to know for sure whether he meant to write Shabur (as in the Syriac chronicles) or Sabur (as in Theophanes: Saborios).

2 The manuscript repeats the previous sentence here; in the margin is written يكرر ('he repeats'/'it is repeated').



مروان الروم (106r) ونزل على حصن يقال له سطوس وأقام عليه زمانا ورجع بغير فتح. وفيها أمر عبد الملك ببناء المصبصة ووضع المصالح فيها لأنها كانت خرابا. وفيها تحصن أهل ارمينية فخرج إليهم محمد بن مروان فهزمهم وقتل جماعة من الروم بها. ثم جمع بطارقة ارمينية وحبسهم في كنيسة عظيمة وألقا النار فيها وأحرقهم واستباح حريمهم. وفيها غزا اشرس الروم فلقي هرقل أخا الملك فهزمهم وقتل كثير (من) العرب وأسر بقيتهم وحملهم إلى قسطنطينية. وفي السنة السادسة عشر لعبد الملك هرب يوسطنيان من الموضع الذي كان منفيا إليه وصار إلى خاقان ملك الخزر فصاهره على ابنته. وفيها غزا يزيد بن الحصين الروم فلقية هرقل فهزمه. وفيها خرج يوسطنيان الملك في جيوش الخزر وصار إلى قسطنطينية ونفا عدوه عن المملكة واستوا (sic) في ملكه بعد عشر سنين كان منفيا فيها. فملك ست سنين آخر. وأخذ سميروس الخارجي ولواطس (sic) فضرب عنقهما وقتل عامة بطارقة الروم. وفيها وجه يوسطنيان خمسين سفينة مملوئة الطافا وخيلا وسلاحا إلى خاقان ملك الخزر...

يقال له لاون ووجه عبد الملك عبد الرحمن بن هشام فالتقيا وكانت الهزيمة على عبد الرحمن وقتل عامة العرب وصارت ارمينية للروم عشر سنين مع جرزان واصان واذربيجان. ثم إن عبد الملك خرج إلى اقرقيسيا (sic) وفتحها في هذه السنة.

(105r) وخرج عمرو بن سعيد بن العاص إلى دمشق فاستولا (sic) عليها وخلع عبد الملك. فلما بلغ عبد الملك ذلك رجع إلى دمشق فخرج إليه عمرو بن سعيد بن العاص في الأمان ودخل عبد الملك دمشق ففسد على عمرو وقتله وأرضا العرب الذين كانوا معه. وفي السنة الثالثة لعبد الملك اشتد الجوع بالشام حتى لجأ جماعة إلى الروم وسكنوا بأرض الفسه. وفي هذه السنة غزا يوسطنيان الصقالبة فسبا منهم ألوفاً عدة وأدخلهم سلطانه. وفيها وجه عبد الله بن الزبير أخاه مصعبا إلى العراق فلقى المختار الكذاب فهزمه وقتل عامة أصحابه. وفيها خرج سمباط بطريق من بطارقة الروم بارمينية فقتل لاون عامل يوسطنيان عليها وسلمها إلى العرب. وفيها قلد عبد الملك الحجاج العراق وفتح فتوحا كثيرة. وفيها خرج شبيب الحروري بالمشرق وأشعر الحجاج شرا وأفسد بالعراق فسادا كثيرا. وفيها اجتمع الأزارقة وخرجوا يطلبون الخلافة فوجه إليهم الحجاج المهلب بن أبي صفرة فقتلهم.

(105v) وقتل شبيب الحروري. وفي السنة العاشرة لعبد الملك انكسفت الشمس. وفيها غزا محمد بن عبد الملك الروم فسبا ورجع. وفيها أمر عبد الملك بقتل خنازير الشام وسورية والجزيرة وغيرها من البلدان وألا يترك في مملكته شي (ء) منها. وفيها نفى يوسطنيان عن الملك بعد أن ملك عشر سنين. وجزموا أنفه في بسفروس فنطس المدينة وملكوا المدينة لنطوس وكان من قواده ثلث سنين. وفيها غزا وليد بن عبد الملك الروم وسبا سبيا كثيرا. وفيها غزا سرجي البطريق بلاد لزاكية وباع العربان. وفيها خرج بطريق من بطارقة الروم يقال له سميروس من قليقاية في جيش كبير فأتى قسطنطينية ونفى لنطوس الملك عن ملكه وجلس في الملك. وفي السنة الخامسة عشرة لعبد الملك خرج بالعراق خارجي يقال له عبد الرحمن بن الأشعث فخرج إليه محمد بن مروان فحاربه وقتله وأصحابه. وفيها غزت الروم سميساط وقتلوا من العرب زها (ء) على خمسة ألف رجل وسبى زها (ء) على عشرة ألف رجل. وفيها غزا عبد الملك بن



## GAZETTEER

I note if a toponym refers to a river, sea, island, fort or region (used loosely to refer to any tract of land, whether district, province or country); all other toponyms refer to settlements (of whatever size). If a toponym is not included on one of the three maps below, I indicate a place/region that it is near to/inside of and that is to be found on one of the maps. The point of this gazetteer is to help the reader locate a particular place; for information on the place, the reader should look to its first occurrence in the translation section above and this can be found via the general index below.

Abydos, on the Asiatic shore of the Hellespont, west of Cyzicus, q.v.  
 Adraa, in Late Roman Arabia / modern Syria, map 1  
 Adramytion, on the Aegean coast just north of Pergamon, q.v.  
 Akroinos, in Phrygia, south-west of Ancyra, q.v.  
 Albania, region, map 1  
 Aleppo, Syria, maps 2, 3  
 Alexandria, Egypt, maps 1, 2  
 Amasea, Asia Minor, map 1  
 Amida, north Mesopotamia, maps 1, 3  
 Amnesia, Asia Minor, exact location unknown  
 Amorion, Asia Minor, map 2  
 'Amwas = Emmaus, q.v.  
 Anatolia = Asia Minor, q.v.  
 Anbar, Iraq, map 2  
 Ancyra, Asia Minor, map 2  
 Antaradus, on the Mediterranean coast, west of Hims, q.v.  
 Antioch, Syria, maps 1, 3  
 Antioch, Pisidia, south of Amorion, q.v.  
 Antipatris, south-east of Palestinian Caesarea, q.v.  
 Apamaea, Syria, map 3  
 Apollonias, northern Greece, west of Thessalonica, q.v.  
 'Aqula = Kufa, q.v.

Arabia, peninsula, map 1  
 Arabia, province of Roman Empire with capital at Bostra, q.v.  
 Arabissos, between Cappadocian Caesarea and Germaniceia, q.v.  
 Armenia, region, maps 1-3  
 Arwad, island, in the Mediterranean Sea, west of Hims, q.v.  
 Arxamoun (or Arzamon), river, south of Mardin, q.v.  
 Arzan, region, of which the principal city was Mayferqat, q.v.  
 Asia Minor, region, map 1  
 'Asqalan, on the Mediterranean coast, north of Gaza, q.v.  
 Assyria, region, of which the principal city was Nineveh, q.v.  
 Ateous, fort in Phrygia or Galatia, q.v.  
 'Ayn Gara, between Damascus and Beirut, q.v.  
 Azerbaijan, region, map 2  
 Baalbek, Lebanon, east of Beirut, q.v.  
 Babylon, Egypt = Fustat, q.v.  
 Babylon, southern Iraq, equivalent to Sawad, map 2  
 Badghis, region, west of Kabul, q.v.  
 Baghdad, Iraq, maps 2, 3  
 Balikh, river, Mesopotamia, map 3  
 Balis = Barbalissos, q.v.  
 Balqa', region, south of Bostra and north of Mu'ta, q.v.  
 Barbalissos, ancient Balis, west of Raqqa, q.v.  
 Bardan (Barada), river running through Damascus, q.v.  
 Basra, Iraq, map 3  
 Batnan of Serug, Osrhoene, south of Edessa, q.v.  
 Beirut, Lebanon, map 3  
 Beroia = Aleppo, q.v.  
 Beth Aramaye, region, Iraq, map 3  
 Beth Botin, village of Rusafa, q.v.  
 Beth Garmai, region, Iraq, map 3  
 Beth Qubaye, fort, Syria, exact location unknown  
 Bithynia, region, Asia Minor, map 1  
 Black Sea, maps 1, 2  
 Bostra, Syria, maps 1, 3  
 Bulgaria, region, map 2  
 Byzantion = Constantinople, q.v.  
 Caesarea, Cappadocia, Asia Minor, map 1



Caesarea, Palestine, map 3  
 Callinicum, Mesopotamia, map 3  
 Cappadocia, region, map 1  
 Caspian Sea, maps 1-3  
 Chalcedon, Asia Minor, map 1  
 Chalcis, south of Aleppo, q.v.  
 Charsianon, fort in Cappadocia, q.v.  
 Cherson, Crimean peninsula, on north side of Black Sea, q.v.  
 Cilicia, region, Asia Minor, map 1  
 Circesium, Mesopotamia, map 3  
 Claudia, a village east of Melitene, q.v.  
 Constantia, Cyprus, map 1  
 Constantina = Tella, q.v.  
 Constantinople, maps 1, 2  
 Crete, island in the Mediterranean Sea, maps 1, 2  
 Ctesiphon, Iraq, maps 1, 3 (with Seleucia)  
 Cyprus, island in the Mediterranean Sea, maps 1, 2  
 Cyrrhus, north of Aleppo, q.v.  
 Cyzicus, Asia Minor, map 1

Dabik, north of Aleppo, q.v.  
 Dalmatia, the eastern coastal region of former Yugoslavia  
 Damascus, Syria, maps 1-3  
 Damatrys, south-east of Constantinople, q.v.  
 Dara, Mesopotamia, map 3  
 Daras, Crimea, near Cherson, q.v.  
 Darayya, south of Damascus, q.v.  
 Daskara = Dastagird, q.v.  
 Dastagird, Sasanian royal estate north-east of Ctesiphon, q.v.  
 Dathesmos, near Jabiya, q.v.  
 Dathin, near Gaza, q.v.  
 Daylam, region, map 2  
 Dayr 'Aqul, south-east of Baghdad, q.v.  
 Dayr Ayyub, west of Bostra, q.v.  
 Dead Sea, between Palestine and southern Syria, map 1  
 Dorylaion, Asia Minor, near Nicaea, q.v.  
 Duluk, Asia Minor, south-east of Germaniceia, q.v.

Ecbatana, Iran, map 1; later called Hamadan, q.v.

Edessa, Osrhoene, maps 1, 3  
 Egypt, region, maps 1, 2  
 Emesa = Hims, q.v.  
 Emmaus, north-west of Jerusalem, q.v.  
 Epiphaneia = Hama, q.v.  
 Ethiopia, region, map 2  
 Euchaita, Asia Minor, map 1  
 Euphrates, river, Iraq and Asia Minor, maps 1-3  
 Fars, region, Iran, map 2  
 Fustat, Egypt, map 2  
 Gabbula, south-east of Aleppo, q.v.  
 Gabitha = Jabiya, q.v.  
 Galatia, region, map 1  
 Gangra, Paphlagonia, west of Amasea, q.v.  
 Gargarum, fort in the Hexapolis, q.v.  
 Gaza, Palestine, maps 1-2  
 Gasika, village of Mardin, q.v.  
 Germaniceia, Asia Minor, map 1  
 Ghuta, region around Damascus, q.v.  
 Gousiya, near Hims, q.v.  
 Gurzan, region within Iberia, q.v.  
 Hadrianopolis, in Pisidia, q.v.  
 Halab = Aleppo, q.v.  
 Halys, river, Asia Minor, map 1  
 Hama, Syria, map 3  
 Hamadan, Iran, map 2; previously called Ecbatana, q.v.  
 Harma = Marj Harma, q.v.  
 Harran, Osrhoene, map 3  
 Harun, near Lazica, q.v.  
 Heliopolis = Baalbek, q.v.  
 Helladia, the region around Corinth in modern southern Greece  
 Heraclea, west of Constantinople, q.v.  
 Hexapolis, region, of which the principal city was Melitene, q.v.  
 Hierapolis = Mabbug, q.v.  
 Hiereia, near Chalcedon, q.v.  
 Hiermouchas = Yarmuk, q.v.



Hind, region, map 2

Hira, southern Iraq, maps 1, 3

Hims, Syria, map 3

Hulwan, Iraq, north-east of Baghdad and west of Qarmisin, q.v.

Hyrcania = Jurjan, q.v.

Iberia, region, in east of modern Georgia, map 1

Iran, region, loosely corresponding to modern Iran, map 3

Iraq, region, loosely corresponding to modern Iraq, map 3

Isauria, region, Asia Minor, map 1

Isfahan, Iran, map 2

Jabiya, Syria, map 3

Jazira, region, equivalent to northern Mesopotamia, map 2

Jalula', Iraq, north-east of Baghdad and west of Qarmisin, q.v.

Jericho, Palestine, map 1

Jerusalem, Palestine, maps 1, 2

Jordan, region, west and east of Sea of Galilee, q.v.

Jordan, river running between Palestine and Jordan, q.v.

Judi, Mount, or Mount Ararat, map 1

Jurjan, region, Iran, map 2

Kabul, Central Asia, map 2

Kamachon = Kamak, q.v.

Kamak, fort, north of Melitene, q.v.

Kastellos, a fortified town on Arwad, q.v.

Khabur, river, Mesopotamia, map 3

Kafartuta, Mesopotamia, map 3

Karka d-Beth Sloth, modern Kirkuk, chief city of Beth Garmai, q.v.

Kermanshah = Qarmisin, q.v.

Khazaria, region, north Caucasus, map 2

Khurasan, region, Iran, map 2

Koloneia, in Pontus, q.v.

Krasos, near Nicaea, q.v.

Kufa, southern Iraq, map 3

Laodicea, on the Mediterranean coast, south of Antioch, q.v.

Lapathos, north-west coast of Cyprus, q.v.

Lazica, region, eastern coast of Black Sea, map 1

Lebanon, region, map 3

Libya, region, west of Egypt, q.v.

Litas (Litani), river in the south of Lebanon, q.v.

Lycia, region, map 1

Mabbug = Manbij, q.v.

Mada'in = Seleucia and Ctesiphon, q.v.

Mahoze = Seleucia and Ctesiphon, q.v.

al-Mahur = al-Mahuz, q.v.

al-Mahuz, north of Tyre, q.v.

Malatya = Melitene, q.v.

Manbij, Syria, map 3

Mar'ash = Germaniceia, q.v.

Mardin, Tur 'Abdin, map 3

Margiana, region around Merw, q.v.

Marj Harma, grazing lands by Hama, q.v.

Marj Rahit, grazing lands by Damascus, q.v.

Martyropolis, map 1, also known as Mayferqat

Masisa = Mopsuestia, q.v.

Mayferqat, Asia Minor, map 3; also known as Martyropolis

Mecca, Arabia, map 2

Media, region, Iran, map 1

Medina, Arabia, map 2

Melitene, Asia Minor, map 3

Merw, Khurasan, map 2

Mesopotamia, region, maps 1, 3

Moab, region east of Dead Sea, q.v.

Mopsuestia, Asia Minor, map 3

Mosul, Jazira, map 2

Moucheon, a village near Mu'ta, q.v.

Mu'ta, southern Syria, map 3

Nawa, west of Bostra, q.v.

Neocaesarea, Asia Minor, map 1

Nicaea, Asia Minor, map 1

Nicomedia, Asia Minor, map 1

Nihawand, Iran, south of Hamadan and south-east of Qarmisin, q.v.

Nile, river, Egypt, maps 1, 2

Niniveh, Iraq, map 3



Nisibis, Osrhoene, maps 1, 3

Nubia, region, map 2

Opsikion, the north-west quarter of Asia Minor, q.v.

Orontes, river, Syria, flows through Hims and Hama, q.v.

Osrhoene, region, north Mesopotamia, map 1

Palestine, region, map 2

Palmyra, Syria, map 3

Pamphylia, region, Asia Minor, map 1

Paphlagonia, region, Asia Minor, map 1

Pelusium, Egypt, east of Alexandria, q.v.

Pentapolis, five cities in Libya, q.v.

Pergamon, Asia Minor, map 1

Phoenicia, a Late Roman province comprising modern Lebanon and southern Syria

Phoenix, Asia Minor, on the coast of Lycia, q.v.

Pirshabur, next to Anbar, q.v.

Pisidia, region, Asia Minor, map 1

Pontus, region, Asia Minor, map 1

Qadash, a village near Kufa, q.v.

Qadisiyya = Qadash, q.v.

Qaliqala = Theodosiopolis, q.v.

Qarmisin, Iran, modern Kermanshah, map 3

Qartmin, monastery, Mesopotamia, map 3

Qenneshre, settlement and monastery on the Euphrates, east of Manbij, q.v.

Qinnasrin, Syria, map 3

Rahit = Marj Rahit, q.v.

Ramla, Palestine, map 3

Raqqa = Callinicum, q.v.

Rayy, Iran, map 2

Resh'aina, Osrhoene, map 3

Rhodes, island in the Mediterranean Sea, map 1

Rome, Italy

Rusafa, Syria, map 3

Samaria, region, north of Jerusalem, q.v.

Samosata, Asia Minor, maps 1, 3

Saqarta = Dastagird, q.v.

Sea of Galilee, in Roman Palestine II / Muslim Jordan, map 1

Sebasteia, modern Sivas, Asia Minor, map 1

Sebastopolis, north-west of Sebasteia and south of Amasea, q.v.

Seleucia, sister city of Ctesiphon, q.v.

Seleukobolos, or Seleucia ad Belum, Syria, north of Apamea, q.v.

Serug, region in Osrhoene of which the principal city was Batnan, q.v.

Septai, modern Ceuta, the northern tip of Morocco

Shahrazur, north-east Iraq, near modern Marivan, map 1

Shiza, fortress in Cilicia, q.v.

Sicily, island in the Mediterranean Sea, off the south coast of Italy

Sideron, fortress in Asia Minor, exact location unknown

Sidon, Lebanon, north of Tyre, q.v.

Siffin, Syria, near Raqqa, q.v.

Sijistan, or Sistan, region, Iran, map 2

Sinai, Mount, in Sinai, q.v.

Sinai, region, between Egypt and Palestine, q.v.

Sind, region, in modern southern Pakistan, map 2

Sision, fortress in Cilicia, q.v.

Sudur = Sideron, q.v.

Syene, modern Aswan in the south of Egypt, q.v.

Synnada, Phrygia, south of Akroinon, q.v.

Syracuse, on the south-east coast of Sicily, q.v.

Syria, region, maps 1-3

Tabaristan, region, map 2

Tabor, Mount, south-west of Tiberias, q.v.

Taranton, Asia Minor, north-west of Melitene, q.v.

Tarsus, south central Turkey, west of Adana, map 1

Tell Gara = 'Ayn Gara, q.v.

Tella, Osrhoene, map 2

Thamanin, Asia Minor, east of Martyropolis, q.v.

Theodosiopolis, Asia Minor, east of Sebasteia, q.v.

Thessalonica, northern Greece, west of Constantinople, q.v.

Thrace, region west of Constantinople, q.v.

Tiberias, on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, q.v.

Tigris, river, Iraq, maps 1-3

Trachonitis, lavalands south of Damascus, q.v.



Tripoli, Lebanon, north of Beirut, q.v.

Tur 'Abdin, Mesopotamia, map 3

Turanda = Taranton, q.v.

Tunada, in Hexapolis, q.v., or else should be read Turanda

Tyana, Asia Minor, south of Cappadocian Caesarea and north of Tarsus, q.v.

Tybranda, in Hexapolis, q.v.

Tyre, Roman Phoenicia / modern Lebanon, map 1

Wasit, Iraq, map 3

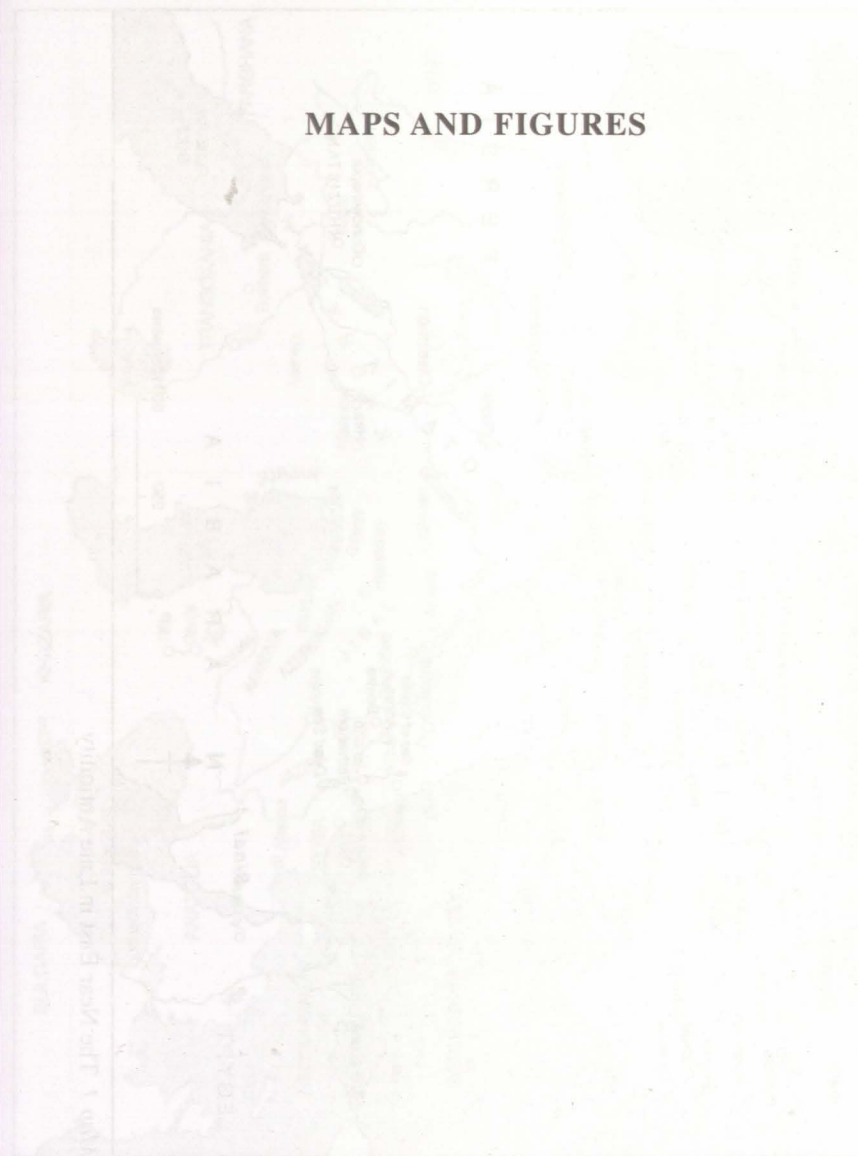
Yarmuk, river, flows east-west into southern end of Sea of Galilee, q.v.

Yathrib = Medina, q.v.

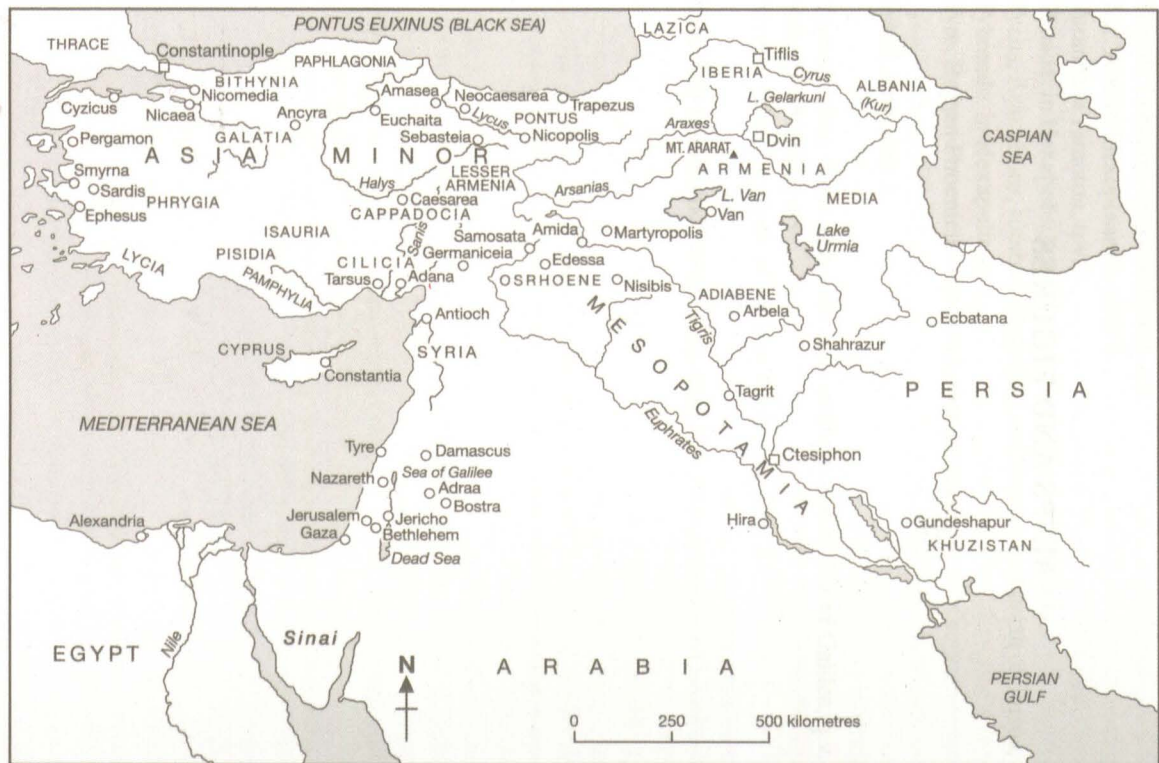
Yemen, region in south of Arabian Peninsula, map 2

Zab, river (upper and lower), Iraq, map 3

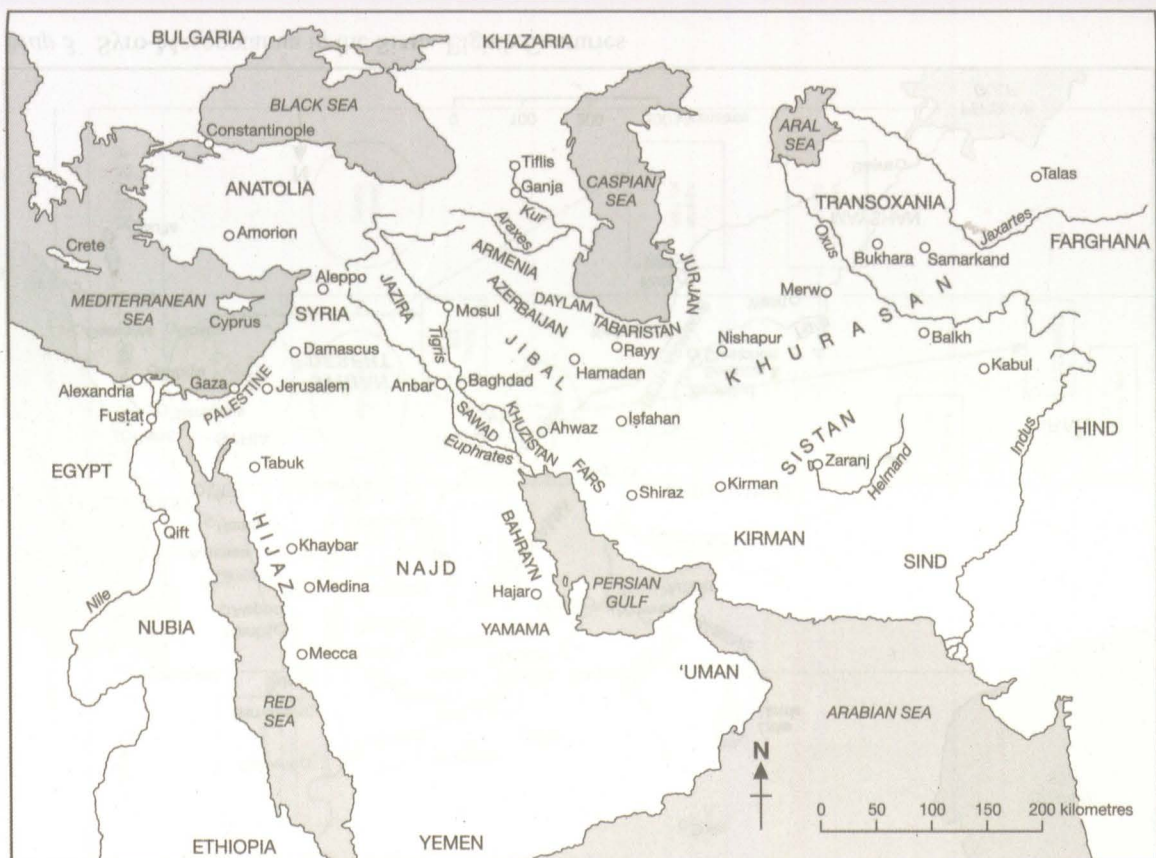
## MAPS AND FIGURES





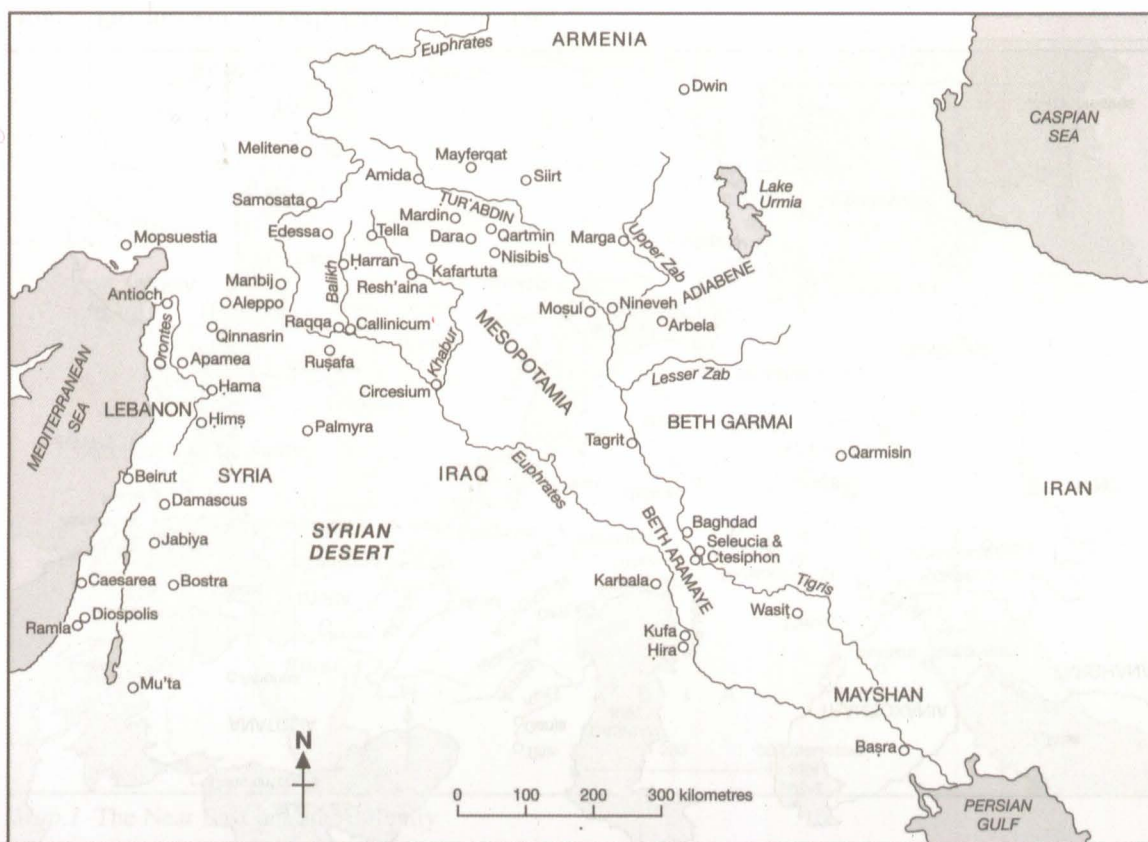


Map 1 The Near East in Late Antiquity



Map 2 Provinces of the Early Islamic Middle East





Map 3 Syro-Mesopotamia in the Sixth-Eighth Centuries

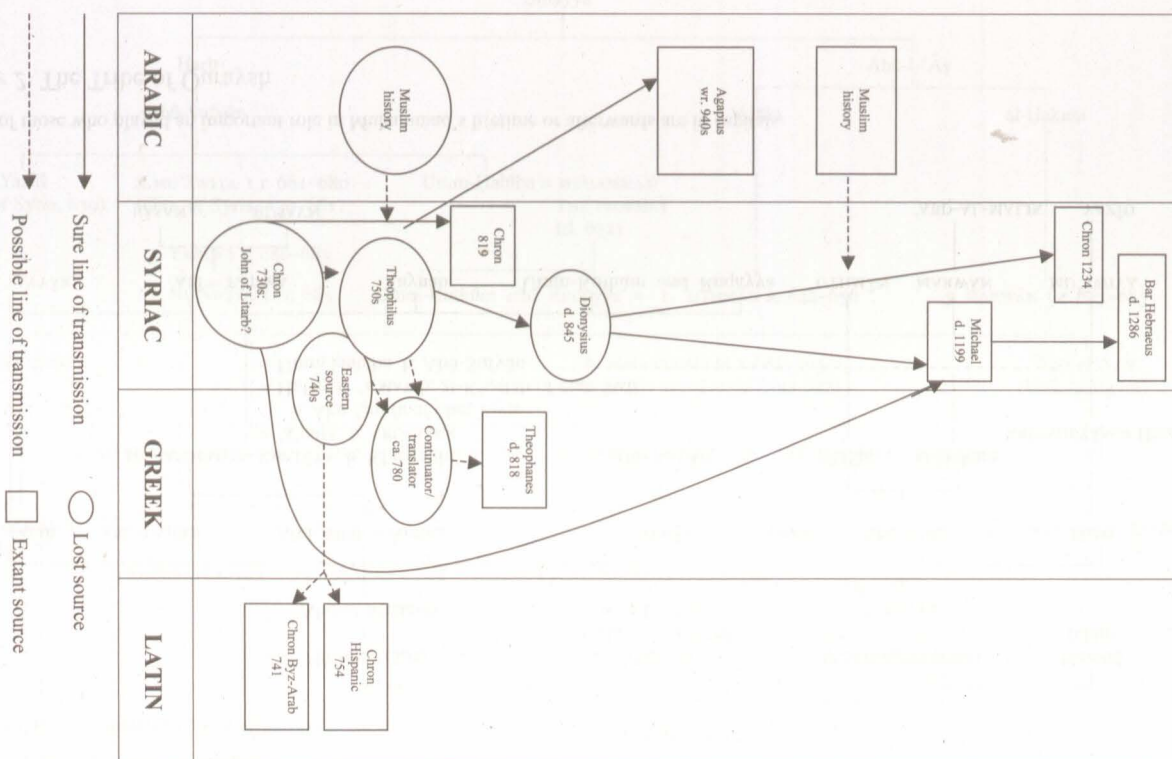
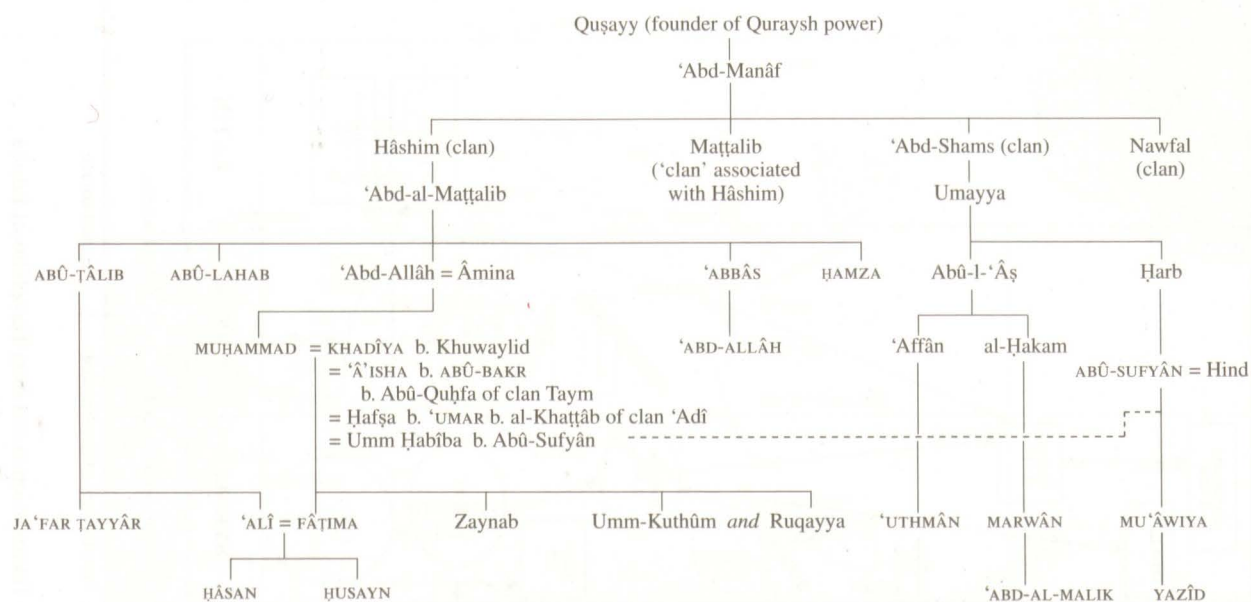


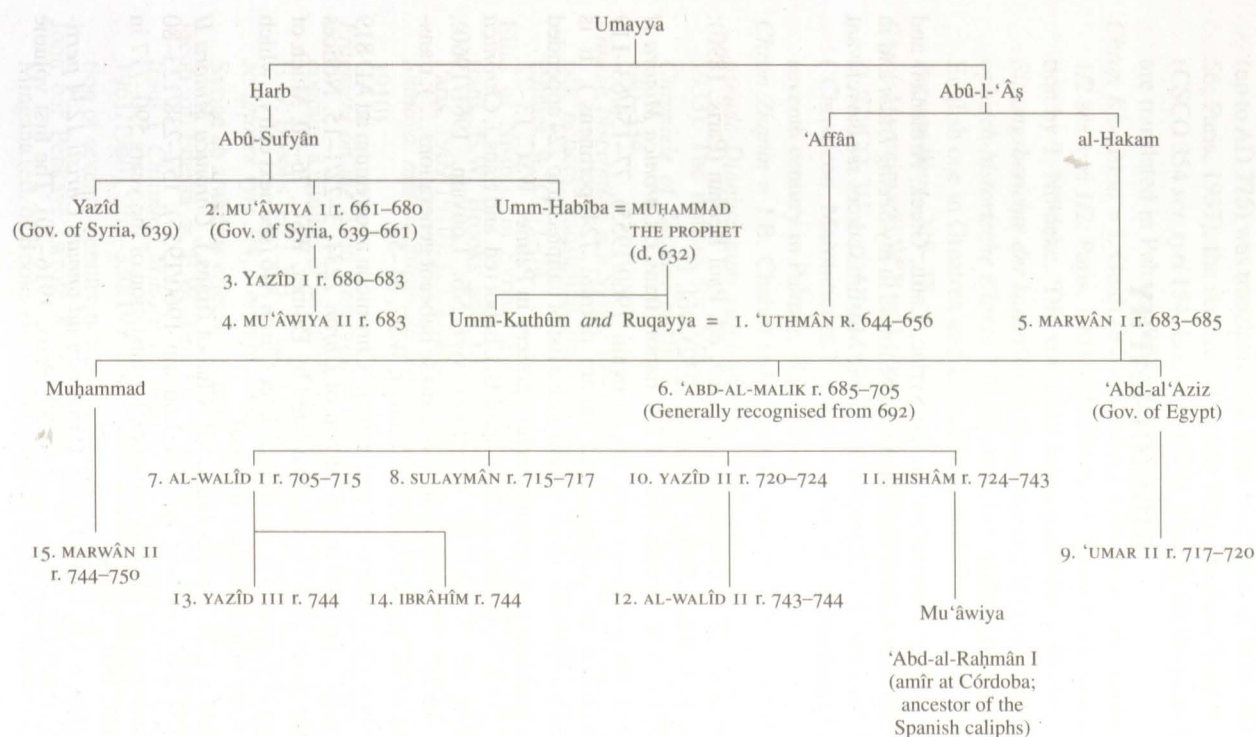
Figure 1 Transmission to and from Theophilus of Edessa





Names of those who played an important role in Muḥammad's lifetime or afterwards are in capitals.

Figure 2 The Tribe of Quraysh



Note: Caliphs or claimants to the caliphate are in capitals

Figure 3 The Umayyad Caliphs



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## INDEX OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

This index is based on the Translation and Appendices and from the Introduction only historians have been included

- 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib 116  
'Abbas (uncle of Muhammad the Prophet) 240  
'Abbas ibn Walid 201-2, 205, 222, 240, 246, 255  
'Abd al-'Aziz ibn al-Hajjaj 245-8, 250-3  
'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Marwan 185  
'Abd al-Jabbar ibn 'Abd al-Rahman 300  
'Abdallah (governor of Hims) 260  
'Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-Malik 194-5, 317  
'Abdallah ibn Abi Sarh 130  
'Abdallah ibn 'Ali 274, 276-7, 279, 281-3, 286-9, 293-7  
'Abdallah ibn Battal 231-2  
'Abdallah ibn Marwan II 259, 261-2, 264, 275-7, 282-3  
'Abdallah ibn Muhammad, Mansur, *see* Abu Ja'far  
'Abdallah ibn Muhammad, al-Saffah, *see* Abu l-'Abbas  
'Abdallah ibn Qays al-Fazari 166, 168  
'Abdallah ibn 'Umar 247-8, 255  
'Abdallah ibn al-Zubayr (rival caliph) 175-9, 183-5  
'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan ibn al-Hakam (caliph) 169, 175, 177, 179-87, 189-91, 193, 195, 199, 234, 316-17  
'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan ibn Muhammad 248  
'Abd al-Rahman ibn Hisham 181  
'Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiya 280  
'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath 193  
'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muljam 148-9, 152  
Abrash ibn Walid *see* Sa'id ibn Walid  
Abu l-'Abbas, 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad, al-Saffah (caliph) 273-8, 280-5, 288, 290, 293-6  
Abu l-A'war ibn Sufyan 133-4, 139-44, 164  
Abu 'Awn 275-7, 296  
Abu Badr 121  
Abu Bakr (caliph) 86-7, 92-3, 95-6, 146  
Abu Duhayl (Hudhayl?) 247-8  
Abu Hassan al-Ziyadi (historian) 31  
Abu Ja'far, 'Abdallah ibn Muhammad, Mansur (caliph) 273-4, 276-7, 284, 288-9, 293-308, 313-14  
Abu Ju'aydid 116-7  
Abu Lu'lu'a 128-9  
Abu Musa al-Ash'ari 147  
Abu Muslim 266-9, 274-5, 280, 293-9  
Abu Salama 274  
Abu Sufyan ibn Harb 103  
Abu 'Ubayda 98, 116-8  
Abu l-Ward 260, 286-7  
Abydos 209, 244  
Adeser *see* Ardashir  
Adraa 271  
Adramyion 207  
Africa 59-61, 65, 119, 130, 164, 235, 247-8, 280, 301-2, 314  
Agapius of Mabbug (Manbij) 14-15 *et passim*  
Agathon (pope) 172  
'A'isha (wife of Muhammad the Prophet) 145

## INDEX OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

359

- Ajnadayn 93  
Akroinon 230, 232  
Alan Gates 73, 305  
Alans 152, 301  
Aleppo 58, 63, 92, 206, 250-1, 311  
Alexandria 60, 65, 93, 110-4, 130-1, 133  
'Ali ibn Abi Talib 116, 133, 145-9, 171-2, 304  
al-'Aliya 252  
Amanus Mountain 169-70  
Amasea/Amasiya 205, 317  
Ambrus *see* 'Amr ibn al-'As  
Amer (Arab general) 226  
Amida 57-8, 78, 121, 267, 288  
'Amir ibn Dubara 265, 268-9  
'Amir ibn Isma'il 282-3  
Amnesia 155  
Amorion 210-11, 238-9  
'Amr ibn al-'As 109-13, 147-8  
'Amr ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As 176-9, 183-4  
'Amwas (Emmaus) 117  
Anastasius (general) *see* Narses  
Anastasius (metropolitan) 312  
Anastasius (II, patriarch of Antioch) 51-2, 58  
Anastasius (II, Byzantine emperor) 203-5, 207-8, 218  
Anastasius of Sinai (monk) 90  
Anastasius, son of Andrew 185  
Anatolikon 208  
Anbar 284, 295  
Ancyra 66, 232  
Ancyrona monastery 217  
Andrew (chamberlain) 154-61  
Andrew (*spatharios*) 239  
Andrew, son of Troilos 162-3  
Antaradus 135  
Antilebanon 250  
Antioch (in Syria) 51-2, 57-9, 62-3, 101, 106-8, 118-9, 151, 186, 190, 206, 240-1, 257, 281, 316  
Antioch (in Pisidia) 205  
Antipatris 285  
Apamaea 62-3, 84, 152-3, 217, 310  
Apollonia (Cyrenaica) 60  
Apollonias (Thrace) 197  
Apsimarus *see* Tiberius II  
'Aqula *see* Kufa  
'Aqulaye 126  
Arabia 88-9, 96, 101-2, 183, 257, 266, 287  
Arabissos 155  
Aran/Arran 229  
Arculf (pilgrim) 126  
Ardashir (Persian emperor) 81-3  
Areopolis *see* Rabbath Moab  
Armenia 51, 57, 75-6, 79, 102, 107, 139-40, 152, 180-2, 184, 188, 190-1, 195-6, 203-4, 228, 230-1, 247-9, 251, 289-91, 301  
Armorium 140  
Artabasdos (contender for the Byzantine throne) 238-40, 244  
Artemius *see* Anastasius II  
Arwad (Arad Constantini) 134-6  
Arxamoun River 55  
Arzan 181-2, 202  
Asbagh ibn Dawud 299  
Ashras/Azar (Arab general) 196  
Askalon 282  
Asia 153, 227-8, 230, 232-4, 239  
Asia Minor 62, 67, 152, 165, 191, 202, 205, 222, 224-6, 230, 242, 293  
Asma' bint 'Umays 146  
Assyria 76, 78-9, 189, 262, 265, 277, 288, 291, 307  
Ateous 226  
Athanasius Sandalaya 271  
'Atiyya (Arab governor) 192, 317  
Avars 68  
'Ayn Gara ('Ayn al-Jarr) 202, 250-2  
Ayyub (son of Sulayman I) 214  
Azarmidukht (Persian empress) 82-3  
Azerbaijan 73, 75-6, 181-2, 228-9, 265, 302  
Baalbek 98, 138, 167-8, 202, 256, 259-61, 271  
Baanes 99-102  
Babylon (Egypt) *see* Fustat  
Babylon (Iraq) 145, 177, 219, 307



- Badhghis 308  
 Baghdad 240, 275, 303-4, 309  
 Bahram Chobin 45-51  
 Bahram (Persian general) 63  
 Bakhtari ibn Hasan 209-10  
 al-Bakhra 247  
 Balikh River 108  
 Balqa' 95-6, 98, 272  
 Bar Hobab *see* 'Umayr ibn al-Hubab  
 Bar Salta of Resh'aina 254  
 Bar Sarig(i) *see* Harith ibn Surayj  
 Barasroth 76  
 Barbalissos (Balis) 147  
 Barca 60  
 Bardan (Barada) River 99-100  
 Bashir (false Tiberius) 233-4  
 Bashir ibn 'Abdallah (emir of Hims) 248  
 Basra 193, 219, 296, 304, 312  
 Batnan of Serug 170-1, 316  
 Battal *see* 'Abdallah ibn Battal  
 Bayt Jibrin 93  
 Benjamin (Jew of Tiberias) 84  
 Benjamin (patriarch) 113-4  
 Berbers 235  
 Berenice 60  
 Beroia *see* Aleppo  
 Beser (apostate iconoclast) 221, 233  
 Beth Aramaye 257, 262  
 Beth Botin 253, 283  
 Beth Garmai 77  
 Beth Qubayeh 271  
 Bethlehem 84  
 Bishr ibn Artat *see* Busr ibn Abi Artat  
 Bishr ibn Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik 250  
 Bistam al-Bayhāsi 246-8, 262  
 Bithynia 153, 208, 226  
 Black Mountain *see* Amanus Mountain  
 Bonosus (Byzantine general) 58-9  
 Boran (Persian empress) 81-3  
 Bosphorus 190  
 Bostra 95-6, 102, 145, 256, 271  
 Bulgaria 197  
 Bulgars 68, 198, 212-3, 218, 317  
 Burayd *see* Yazid ibn Abi Sakhr  
 Bushay River 263  
 Busr ibn Abi Artat 152-3, 165  
 Byzantium 55, 57, 70, 150, 264  
 Bzntya 142  
 Caesarea (in Cappadocia) 62-4, 125, 139-41, 186, 225  
 Caesarea (in Palestine) 90, 93-4, 123-5  
 Cairo *see* Fustat  
 Callinicum (Raqqa) 147, 223-4, 257-9, 288  
 Callinicus (architect) 167-8  
 Cappadocia 57-8, 66, 227, 232  
 Caspian Gates 73-4, 228-9, 243, 305  
 Caspian Sea 73  
 Caucasus 140  
 Chalcedon 53-5, 57, 65-6, 69-70, 156, 158, 211, 244  
 Chalcis 118, 286, 311  
 Charsianon 227  
 Cherson 190, 202-3  
 Chronicler of 1234 12-13 *et passim*  
 Cilicia 67, 108, 125, 166-7, 192, 195-6, 202, 222, 292, 317  
 Circesium (Qarqisiya) 46, 178, 184, 258, 261-2, 276-7, 288, 296  
 Claudia 290  
 Comentiolus 46  
 Constans (II, Byzantine emperor) 121-3, 128-30, 138-9, 141-4, 150-1, 153-4, 156-8, 162-4, 172  
 Constantia *see* Tella  
 Constantine (III, Byzantine emperor) 70, 122-3  
 Constantine (IV, Byzantine emperor) 150-1, 154-5, 158, 162-4, 166, 169, 172-4, 180, 182  
 Constantine (V, Byzantine emperor) 230, 232, 237-40, 244, 264, 277, 279, 289, 292, 300, 311, 313  
 Constantinople 46, 47, 53, 55, 58, 60-1, 66, 68, 70-2, 79, 84, 97, 106-7, 130, 138, 141-3, 150-2, 158, 162-4, 166, 172, 192, 196-8, 203-4, 209-12, 215-16, 218, 234, 236-9, 244, 264, 273, 292  
 Cos 139-40  
 Cosmas (patriarch of Alexandria) 313

- Cosmas Komanites 313  
 Cottanias (Byzantine general) 58-9  
 Crete 140, 168  
 Ctesiphon 50-1, 67, 72, 75-7, 84, 104-5, 269-70, 303-4  
 Cyprian (Byzantine general) 167  
 Cyprus 80, 131-5, 180-2, 185-7, 192, 243, 248  
 Cyrene 60  
 Cyriacus (bishop of Sijistan) 254  
 Cyrrhus 169, 186  
 Cyrus (patriarch of Alexandria) 109-14  
 Cyrus (bishop of Edessa) 80  
 Cyrus (tax-collector/prefect of Edessa) 66-7  
 Cyzicus 164, 167, 187  
 Dabik 312, 314, 317  
 Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri 175-9  
 Dahhak ibn Qays al-Shaybani 255-6, 261-3  
 Damascus 59, 64, 92, 98-103, 115, 135-6, 138, 143, 146-8, 154-6, 158, 160, 172, 175-9, 183-4, 199-200, 207, 232, 235, 242-3, 245-7, 249-53, 256, 258-60, 266, 271, 274, 279-81, 286-7, 291, 311  
 Damaskenos (Kulthum ibn 'Iyad, governor of Africa) 235  
 Damatrys 203  
 Daniel son of Moses/Samuel (historian) 185  
 Dara 50, 52, 55-7, 82, 120-1, 262, 288-9  
 Daras 196  
 Darayya 271  
 Daskara *see* Saqarta  
 Dastagird *see* Saqarta  
 Dathemon/Dathesmos 90, 93  
 Dathin *see* Dathemon/Dathesmos  
 David Urtaya 121  
 Daylam/Daylamites 47, 299, 302-3  
 Dayr 'Aqul 255, 267, 274  
 Dayr Ayyub 257  
 Dayr al-Jamajim 193  
 Dinar ibn Dinar 190, 316  
 Dionysius of Telmahre 11-13 *et passim*  
 Diyarbakir *see* Amida  
 Domitianus (bishop of Melitene) 49  
 Dorylaion 238  
 Duluk 264  
 Edessa 47, 49, 55, 57-8, 62, 67-9, 79-81, 95-6, 102, 118, 120-1, 161, 170-1, 184, 220, 233-4, 236, 250, 288-90, 316  
 Egypt 61, 65, 67, 75-6, 83, 87, 92-3, 107, 109-14, 118, 131, 133, 138, 145-6, 148, 167-8, 177, 179, 228, 231, 245, 274, 276, 280-1, 290-1  
 Eleutheropolis *see* Bayt Jibrin  
 Elias (imperial bodyguard) 203  
 Elustriya of Harran 199  
 Emesa *see* Hims  
 Emmaus *see* 'Amwas  
 Epiphaneia *see* Hama  
 Epiphanius (bishop) 109  
 Ethiopia 65  
 Euchaita 124-5  
 Eudokia (daughter of Heraclius I) 74, 109  
 Euphrates River 57-8, 63, 69, 79, 81, 83, 89, 97, 104-5, 118-21, 147, 161, 184, 189, 223-4, 249-51, 255, 257, 259, 269-70, 276, 281, 295, 307, 317  
 Europe 212, 280  
 Eustathius of Neapolis 84  
 Eustathius son of Marianus 231, 237  
 Fadala ibn 'Ubayd 155-6, 161, 164-5, 168  
 Farama *see* Pelusium  
 Fars 269  
 Farwa (governor of Qinnasrin) 218  
 Fatima (daughter of Muhammad the Prophet) 116, 304-5  
 Florus (Byzantine general) 167  
 Fustat 112-13, 282-3  
 Gabbula 259  
 Gabitha 90, 96, 100-3, 175, 177-9  
 Galatia 57-8, 66, 70-2, 153, 205  
 Galilee (mountain) 170  
 Galilee (province) 64  
 Gamer (Arab general) 231  
 Gangra 227-8  
 Ganzak 78  
 Gargarum 202



- Garis *see* 'Ayn al-Jarr  
 Gasika 220  
 Gaza 92-3  
 George, bishop of the Arabs 27  
 George of Cyprus 292  
 George Syncellus 8-10, 25-26  
 Gepids 68  
 Germaniceia 264  
 Germanicus/Germanus (patriarch of Constantinople) 230  
 Ghamr ibn Yazid ibn 'Abd al-Malik 242  
 Ghassanids (tribe) 47, 90  
 al-Ghazz 262  
 Ghuta 271  
 Gousiya 97  
 Gregory (killed by Harurites) 265  
 Gregory (Byzantine general) 108-9  
 Gregory (*logothete*) 239  
 Gregory (patrician of Africa) 130  
 Gregory (patrician, father of Nicetas) 60-1  
 Gregory (II, pope) 224-5  
 Gregory (nephew of Heraclius I) 138  
 Gurzan 181-2, 305
- Habib ibn Maslama 98, 140, 145  
 Habib ibn Murra 286-7  
 Hadrianopolis 155  
 Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (viceroys of 'Abd al-Malik) 183-5, 188-9, 271  
 Hakam ibn Walid ibn Yazid 246, 248  
 Halab *see* Aleppo  
 Halys River 62  
 Hama 287, 313  
 Harith ibn Ka'b 194  
 Harith ibn Surayj (Bar Sarig/Sarigi) 247-8  
 Harran 121, 233-4, 237, 248-50, 252-3, 257-9, 261, 265-6, 267-8, 274-8, 281-2, 288-90, 295, 298  
 Harura 149-50  
 Harurites 149-50, 188-9, 261-3, 313, 317  
 Hasan ibn 'Ali (Shi'ite leader) 148, 304  
 al-Hasan ibn Harran 302  
 Hasan ibn Qahtaba 275-7  
 Hashim ibn 'Abd Manaf 266  
 Hassan ibn Malik ibn Bahdal 175-9
- Hawran 98  
 al-Haytham ibn 'Adi (historian) 31  
 Hebdomon 166  
 Heliopolis *see* Baalbek  
 Hera 92  
 Heraclea 53  
 Heraclius I (Byzantine Emperor) 45, 59-62, 68-81, 83-5, 93, 95-7, 99-102, 106-13, 118-9, 122  
 Heraclius (governor of Africa) 59-61  
 Heraclius (son of Constans II) 150-1, 162-3, 173-4  
 Heraclius (son of Justinian II) 196  
 Heraclius Constantine *see* Constantine III  
 Heraclonas (Byzantine emperor) 122-3  
 Hexapolis 155, 165, 202  
 Hierapolis *see* Mabbug  
 Hiereia 292  
 Hiermouchas *see* Yarmuk  
 Hims 59, 62-3, 97-102, 140, 248-51, 255-7, 259-61, 264, 286-7, 297, 310-11, 315  
 Hind 306  
 Hira 92, 105, 219  
 Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik (caliph) 223-4, 230, 232-5, 237, 239-41, 249, 252, 258-60, 311, 318  
 Hormizd (IV, Persian emperor) 45, 46, 48  
 Hormizd (contender for Persian throne) 82-3, 104  
 Hulwan 105, 298  
 Humayd ibn Qahtaba 296, 304  
 Huns (western) *see* Avars  
 Husayn son of 'Ali (Shi'ite leader) 148
- Iberia (Caucasian) 180, 305  
 Ibn al-Ash'ath 299  
 Ibn Fadl 291  
 Ibn Ishaq (historian) 95  
 Ibrahim ibn al-Ashtar 185  
 Ibrahim ibn Muhammad (Shi'ite leader) 266-7, 269, 274-5  
 Ibrahim ibn Walid (caliph) 248-51, 253, 257, 266, 274-5  
 Iraq 69, 145, 149, 176, 184-5, 188, 219, 255, 258, 261, 269

- Irene (wife of Constantine V) 230  
 'Isa Galba 272  
 'Isa ibn Musa 273, 294, 298, 304, 313  
 Isaiah (bishop of Edessa) 81  
 Isauria 138, 152  
 Isfahan 269  
 Ishaq ibn Muslim 'al-'Uqayli 263, 287-9  
 Istanbul *see* Constantinople  
 Italy 225  
 'Iyad ibn Ghanm 118-21
- Jabalq 269  
 Jabiya *see* Gabitha  
 Ja'far (brother of 'Ali) 146  
 Jacob of Edessa 27, 33, 82  
 Jafna (Abu Jafna Nu'man ibn al-Mundhir, chief of Ghassanids) 47-8  
 Jahwar ibn Marrar 296, 299  
 Jalula 105  
 Jarrah ibn 'Abdallah al-Hakami 228-9  
 al-Jazira *see* Mesopotamia  
 Jericho 272-3  
 Jerusalem 58, 64-5, 78-9, 83-4, 90, 98, 106, 114-7, 124, 126-7, 169, 233, 260, 314  
 John (patriarch of Antioch) 253-4, 271  
 John of Antioch (historian) 4, 26, 57, 60  
 John of Damascus 292  
 John of Litarb (monk and historian) 27, 33, 316  
 John of Rusafa 49, 57, 69  
 John, son of Samuel (historian) 26  
 John the Baptist 311  
 John (deacon) 207  
 John Kataias 118-9  
 John Mystakon 51  
 John Pitzigaudes 169  
 John Strouthos 203  
 Jonah (physician) 66  
 Jordan (province) 59, 64, 98, 176, 178, 251, 270  
 Jordan (river) 64  
 Joseph (Jew of Edessa) 81  
 Judham (tribe) 255  
 al-Judi Mountain 78  
 Jurjan (Hyracania) 269, 302-3
- Justinian (I, Byzantine emperor) 84  
 Justinian (II, Byzantine emperor) 173-4, 180-2, 186-8, 190, 192, 197-8, 201-3
- Ka'ba 137  
 Kabul 306  
 Kafartuta 261-2, 288  
 Kaisarion 147  
 Kakorizos (chamberlain) 134  
 Kamak 202, 300  
 Kalb/Kalbites (tribe) 175, 253, 255, 257, 260  
 Karbala 148  
 Kardigan/Kardarigan (Persian general) 55, 57, 68-72, 82-3  
 Kastellos 134  
 Kathir ibn Rabi'a 224  
 Kawad (II, Persian emperor) *see* Shiroi  
 Khadija (wife of Muhammad the Prophet) 86-7  
 Khabur River 295  
 Khalid (Arab general; = 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn al-Walid?) 166  
 Khalid ibn 'Akki 290  
 Khalid ibn al-Walid 91, 96-8, 99-101, 152  
 Khalid ibn Yazid 176-7  
 Khalifa ibn Khayyat (historian) 31, 37  
 Kharijites *see* Harurites  
 Khaybari *see* Sa'id ibn Bahdal  
 Khazaria 228  
 Khazars 73-5, 181, 196-8, 228-30, 305  
 Khazim ibn Khuzayma 299, 308-9  
 Khoream *see* Shahrbaraz  
 Khurasan 105, 136-7, 188, 247-8, 266-9, 276, 281, 300, 308  
 Khusrau (II, Persian Emperor) 45-52, 55-8, 61, 65-79, 83  
 Khusrau (III, contender for Persian throne) 82  
 Koloneia 152  
 Koutabas (man of Quraysh) 91  
 Krasos 238  
 Kufa 104-5, 147-8, 176, 178, 185, 193, 219, 235, 255, 262, 267, 274-5, 277, 295, 297, 304-5  
 Kurshib (Khurshid, leader of Tabaristan) 302



- Kushan (patriarch of Armenia) 289, 301  
 Kyklobion 166–7
- Laodicea 59  
 Lapathos 134  
 Layth (governor of Qinnasrin) 218  
 Lazica 191–2, 305  
 Lebanon (mountain) 170, 181–2  
 Lebanon (province) 169, 180, 182, 251  
 Leo (patrician) 173–4  
 Leo (governor of Armenia) 181, 188  
 Leo (III, Byzantine emperor) 208–12, 216, 221, 224–5, 230, 232, 234, 237–8, 244  
 Leo (son of Constantine V) 279  
 Leontius (Byzantine emperor) 190, 192, 197–8  
 Libya 65, 280, 291  
 Litas River 250–1  
 Lycia 141, 166–7
- Ma'ab 95  
 Ma'add (tribe) 105  
 Mabbug 46–7, 49, 55, 58, 63, 81, 84–5, 99, 106, 273  
 Mada'in *see* Ctesiphon  
 Magnaura *see* Hebdomon  
 Mahdi (caliph) *see* 'Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah  
 al-Māhūr 243  
 Mahuza *see* Ctesiphon  
 Majza'a ibn al-Kawthar *see* Abu l-Ward  
 Malatya *see* Melitene  
 Malik ibn Shabib 231–2  
 Manbij *see* Mabbug  
 Mansur *see* Abu Ja'far  
 Mansur ibn Ja'wana 286–7, 289  
 Manuel (governor of Egypt) 110–4, 130, 138  
 Mardaites 169–70, 180–2, 186  
 Mardanshah son of Zarnosh 185  
 Mardif *see* Kardigan  
 Mardin 57, 108, 121, 220  
 Margiana 106  
 Maria (the Roman, wife of Khusrau II) 52  
 Marj Harma (al-Akhram) 287  
 Marj Rahit 175, 177  
 Martat ibn Sharik 199, 218  
 Martin (pope) 162  
 Martina (mother of Heraclonas) 122–3  
 Martyropolis *see* Mayferqat  
 Marwan ibn al-Hakam (caliph) 175–9, 182  
 Marwan II ibn Muhammad (caliph) 229–30, 247–67, 269, 271, 274–6, 278–83, 286  
 Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik 194, 201–2, 204–7, 209–15, 218–20, 222, 225, 227–9, 232, 246, 317–18  
 Masrur ibn Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik 250–1  
 Maurianus (Byzantine general) 140  
 Maurice I (Byzantine emperor) 46–56, 62  
 Maurus Bessus 203  
 Mayferqat (Mayyafariqin) 50, 230, 288–9, 310  
 Maximus the Confessor 162, 204  
 Mecca 183–5, 187, 283, 293–5, 297, 310  
 Media 76, 106, 182, 228, 266  
 Medina *see* Yathrib  
 Melitene 49, 142, 155–6, 160–1, 203, 205, 232, 236, 289–90, 301  
 Merw 136–7, 300  
 Mesopotamia 48–9, 55, 59, 67, 75, 79, 81, 97, 107, 118–21, 165, 168, 170, 176, 183–4, 189, 205–6, 223, 233, 237, 246, 248–9, 252, 256, 261, 269–70, 274, 276, 286–90, 296, 299, 307  
 Mezizios (contender for Byzantine throne) 162–4  
 Michael the Syrian 12–13 *et passim*  
 Moab 93, 272, 311  
 Modestus (patriarch of Jerusalem) 84  
 Mopsuestia 194–5, 199, 317  
 Moses (deacon and physician) 313  
 Mostiya 205, 317  
 Mosul 75, 184, 246, 248, 261–2, 266, 275–6, 290–91, 295, 298, 300, 308  
 Mothous *see* Mu'ta  
 Moucheon 91  
 Mouchesias the Zealot 314  
 Mu'adh (chief of Taghlib) 206  
 Mu'adh ibn Jabal 117  
 Mu'awiya I ibn Abi Sufyan (caliph) 118–20,

- 123–5, 127, 131–6, 138–50, 154–61, 167, 169–72, 180  
 Mu'awiya ibn Hisham 226–8  
 Mu'awiya ibn Hudayj 164  
 Mu'awiya al-Saksaki 246–8, 260  
 Mu'awiya II ibn Yazid (caliph) 175  
 Mughira ibn Shu'ba 128  
 Muhallab ibn Abi Sufra 188  
 Muhammad (the Prophet) 86–9, 91–3, 145–6, 191, 297  
 Muhammad (governor of Qinnasrin) 218  
 Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah (Shi'ite leader) 304–5  
 Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah, Mahdi (caliph) 300, 308–9, 313–14  
 Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah al-Thaqafi 166  
 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik 186, 192  
 Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr 146–7  
 Muhammad ibn al-Hanfiyya (son of 'Ali) 175  
 Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (historian) 31, 37  
 Muhammad ibn Marwan 184–5, 187, 191, 193–6, 206, 246  
 Mukhtar (Shi'ite leader) 175–6, 178, 181–4  
 Mulabbad ibn Harmala 299  
 Mundhir ('king of the Arabs') 55  
 Mundhir ibn Zubayr 289  
 Muqatil al-'Akki 295  
 al-Murra (fort) 142  
 Musa ibn Ka'b 281, 283, 288, 299, 305, 307  
 Musa ibn Mus'ab 307–8  
 Musa ibn Sulayman 307  
 Mus'ab ibn al-Zubayr 183–4  
 Mu'ta 91–2, 96
- Nadhr (governor of Qinnasrin) 218  
 Narses (Byzantine general) 49, 51, 55  
 Nahrwan canal 77  
 Nasr (governor of Circesium) 289  
 Nawa 271  
 Neo-Caesarea 225, 318  
 Nicaea 207–9, 226–8, 273  
 Nicephorus (historian) 57, 60  
 Nicephorus (patrician) 155, 158
- Nicetas of Baalbek 311  
 Nicetas (son of Gregory) 60–1  
 Nicomedia 209  
 Nihawand 105–6, 128  
 Nile River 161, 282  
 Niniveh 74–5, 77, 262, 265–6, 291  
 Nisibis 47, 82, 178, 184, 261–2, 288, 295–6  
 Nubia 65, 218, 283
- Opsikion 51, 162, 203, 207, 238–9  
 Orontes River 62  
 Osrhoene 118
- Palestine 53, 57, 59, 62, 64, 66–7, 76, 79, 83–4, 87, 89–90, 92–5, 114–5, 117, 123–4, 149, 167–8, 176, 178, 231, 255–6, 259–60, 270, 282, 285, 291, 297, 307  
 Palmyra 98, 245–6, 253, 258–9, 262, 313  
 Pamphylia 153  
 Paphlagonia 57, 66, 222, 227, 238  
 Parthia 269  
 Pasagnathes (patrician of Armenia) 139  
 Patricius Klausys 187  
 Paul (Byzantine official) 180–1  
 Pelusium 130  
 Pentapolis 60  
 Pergamon 211, 233–4, 317  
 Peroz (contender for Persian throne) 82–3  
 Persia 47–9, 57, 64–5, 67–71, 73, 78–84, 92, 95, 104, 148–9, 175, 182–4, 218–19, 245, 258, 261, 266, 268, 274, 294  
 Peter (brother of Maurice I) 49, 53–4  
 Peter of Maiouma 242  
 Petronas (Byzantine general) 167  
 Pharpar River 100  
 Philagrius (Byzantine treasurer) 122  
 Philippicus (brother-in-law of Maurice I) 54  
 Philippicus Bardanes (Byzantine emperor) 202–45  
 Phocas (Byzantine emperor) 53–5, 57–62  
 Phoenicia 57, 62, 66, 81, 101, 141, 168, 178, 253, 258–9, 287  
 Phoenix 141–4  
 Phrygia 239  
 Pontus 153, 190, 204, 225, 318



Probus (patrician) 46  
 Procopius (ambassador) 138  
 Ptolemais 60  
 Ptolemy (Byzantine general) 118–21, 138  
 Pyrrhus (patriarch of Constantinople) 122  
  
 Qadash 104–5  
 Qadisiyya 104–5, 281  
 Qahtaba ibn Shabib al-Ta'i 268–9  
 Qanan (Arab chief) 109  
 Qarmisin 269  
 Qasiyun Mountain 174  
 al-Qatiran ibn Akwa 262  
 Qays *see* 'Abdallah ibn Qays al-Fazari  
 Qays/Qaysites 268, 286–8, 311  
 Qenneshre 58, 63  
 Qinnasrin 59, 119, 194, 199, 206, 217, 260, 307  
 Quraysh (tribe) 88, 91, 104, 116, 128, 152, 175, 177–8  
 Qurra ibn Sharik 194, 199  
  
 Rabbath Moab 91  
 Ramla 93, 286  
 Raqqa *see* Callinicum  
 Rayy 269, 299, 308  
 Razates *see* Rozbihan  
 Resh'aina 52, 57, 108, 121, 177, 184, 261, 288, 296  
 Rhodes 66, 139–40, 144, 207  
 Roman Empire 46, 56–7, 119, 168  
 Romania *see* Asia Minor  
 Rome 150–1, 225  
 Romizan/Rousmiazan *see* Shahrbaraz  
 Rozbihan 74–7  
 Rufus (stablemaster) 203  
 al-Ruha *see* Edessa  
 Rusafa 48, 251–3, 258  
  
 Saba (desert) 241  
 Sacellarius *see* Theodore (the Sacellarius)  
 Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas 96, 104–5  
 al-Saffah *see* Abu l-'Abbas  
 Sahsahna canal 174  
 Sa'id ibn al-'As ibn Abi Uhayha 110, 136–7

Sa'id ibn Bahdal 246–8, 263  
 Sa'id ibn Hisham 260  
 Sa'id ibn Walid (al-Abrash) 247  
 Sakasi *see* Mu'awiya al-Saksaki  
 Salih ibn 'Ali 274, 280–3, 285, 290–91, 294, 296, 300–1, 306, 311–12  
 Samaria 273  
 Samosata 194, 288–9  
 Saqarta 69, 74, 76–7  
 Sardis 211, 317  
 Sasanian Empire 50  
 Sebastopolis 186, 188  
 Seir Mountain 256  
 Seleucia *see* Ctesiphon (Mada'in)  
 Seleukobolos (Seleucia ad Bellum) 152  
 Septai (Ceuta) 280  
 Sergiopolis *see* Rusafa  
 Sergius (aide of Armenian rebel) 154–5, 158–61  
 Sergius (governor of Caesarea) 93–4, 97  
 Sergius (patrician of Lazica) 191–2  
 Sergius (son of John) of Rusafa 16, 57, 69, 95  
 Sergius son of Mansur (treasurer of 'Abd al-Malik) 187  
 Severus (of Mardin) 220  
 Shabib (Kharijite) 188, 317  
 Shabur (rebel governor of Armenia) 153–8, 160–1, 165  
 Shahin Patgosapan 63, 66  
 Shahrazur 77  
 Shahrbaraz 51, 55–8, 64–6, 68–73, 75–6, 78–85, 99–100, 102  
 Shahrriyun *see* Shahrbaraz  
 al-Shām *see* Syria  
 Sham'allaha (chief of Taghlib) 206  
 Shamta (son of Yazdin) 72  
 Sharahil ibn 'Abd/'Ubayda 213, 317  
 Shayba (Zoroastrian rebel; = Sunbadh?) 299  
 Shayban ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Yashkuri 265–6  
 Shirin (wife of Khusrau II) 52  
 Shiroy (Kawad II, Persian emperor) 77–83  
 Shiza 222  
 Siarsoura *see* Shahrazur

Sicily 143, 150–1, 162–4  
 Sideron 231–2  
 Sidon 169–70, 243  
 Siffin 147–8  
 Sijistan 106, 136–7  
 Simeon son of Nonnus 185  
 Sinai 92, 256  
 Sinai (Mount) 257  
 Sind 299  
 Sinope 203  
 Sisinnius 244  
 Sision 196  
 Sistan *see* Sijistan  
 Slavs 68, 186, 191–2  
 Smbat (rebel in Hims; = al-Simt ibn Thabit al-Asbagh?) 257  
 Smbat Bagratuni 187–8  
 Smyrna 166  
 Sophia 60  
 Sophronius (patriarch of Jerusalem) 114–7  
 Spain 280  
 Stephen (envoy of Justinian II) 197  
 Stephen (patriarch of Antioch) 240–1, 257  
 Stephen (Syrian monk) 311  
 Sufyan ibn 'Awf 167  
 Sulayman I ibn 'Abd al-Malik (caliph) 207–8, 213, 272–3, 317  
 Sulayman ibn 'Ali 296  
 Sulayman ibn Hisham 231–4, 237–8, 246–53, 255, 257–62  
 Sulayman ibn Mu'adh 209–11  
 Syene 282  
 Syllaion 167  
 Synnada 232  
 Syracuse 150–1, 162–3  
 Syria 53, 55, 57–8, 62–3, 66–7, 76, 79–81, 93, 100–3, 106–8, 115, 118–21, 127, 133–6, 138, 143, 145–6, 149, 152, 164–5, 167–72, 178–9, 183, 186, 189, 194, 200–2, 206, 213, 215, 225, 231–3, 243, 254, 256, 264, 270, 274, 276–7, 281–2, 286–8, 291, 294, 298, 301, 307, 313–14, 316–18  
 Syrias (al-Shāmāt) 59, 67, 74–5, 79, 99, 119, 176, 255, 258, 264, 296  
  
 Tabaristan 302  
 Tabor Mountain 272  
 Tabiata 262  
 Taranton 194  
 Tayyi' (tribe) 63, 88  
 Tell Gara *see* 'Ayn al-Jarr  
 Tella 57, 81, 120–1, 131–4, 288  
 Tervel (Bulgar chief) 197, 203  
 Thabit ibn Nu'aym al-Judhami 253, 255–7  
 Thamanin/Thamanon 78, 288  
 Theodora (wife of the Khazar Khagan) 197  
 Theodore (brother of Heraclius I) 79–81, 91, 96–8, 103, 138  
 Theodore (rebel in Lebanon) 312  
 Theodore (patriarch of Antioch) 311, 313  
 Theodore (patriarch of Jerusalem) 313  
 Theodore son of Mansur 310  
 Theodore Trithyrios (the Sacellarius) 99–103  
 Theodore (vicarius) 91  
 Theodosiopolis (Erzerum) 289, 300–1  
 Theodosius (brother of Constans II) 142–4, 150–1  
 Theodosius (III, Byzantine emperor) 207–12  
 Theophanes the Confessor 7–10 *et passim*  
 Theopantus (citizen of Harran) 233–4  
 Theophilus of Edessa 4–7, 12–14, 16, 19–29, 33–34, 278  
 Theophylact (chamberlain) 197  
 Theophylact (Byzantine general) 197  
 Theophylact (patriarch of Antioch) 257–8  
 Thessalonica 141, 143–4, 207  
 Thomas (bishop of Apamea) 134–6, 310  
 Thrace 51, 54, 68, 166, 197, 209, 244, 264, 317  
 Tiberias 83, 170, 255–7, 272  
 Tiberius (son of Constans II) 150–1, 162–3, 173–4  
 Tiberius (son of Justinian II) 197–8, 204, 233–4  
 Tiberius II Apsimarus (Byzantine emperor) 192, 194–5, 197–8, 203  
 Tibranda 202  
 Tigris River 104–5, 161, 193, 220, 266,



- 269–70, 277, 303–4, 309  
 Titus (Byzantine general) 121  
 Trachonitis 273  
 Tripoli 141–3  
 Tunada 202  
 Turanda 205, 317  
 Tur 'Abdin 56  
 Turks 46, 106, 228–9, 305  
 Tyana (Tuwana) 201, 204, 232  
 Tyre 170, 243
- 'Ubaydallah ibn Marwan II 251, 259, 276–7, 282–3  
 'Ubaydallah ibn Ziyad 181–4  
 'Umar I ibn al-Khattab (caliph) 95–6, 98, 102, 104–5, 110, 112–9, 121–2, 126–9, 146, 316  
 'Umar II ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (caliph) 209–11, 214–19, 242, 318  
 'Umar ibn Hubayra 209  
 'Umayr ibn al-Hubab 177  
 Urfa *see* Edessa  
 Urhay *see* Edessa  
 'Uthman ibn 'Affan (caliph) 128–9, 136–7, 144–7, 172  
 'Uthman ibn Hayyan 202  
 'Uthman ibn Walid ibn Yazid 246, 248
- Valentinus (patrician) 121  
 Valentinus (contender for Byzantine throne) 122, 128
- Walid I ibn 'Abd al-Malik (caliph) 191–2, 199–201, 204, 206–7, 317  
 Walid ibn Mu'awiya 279–81  
 Walid ibn 'Umar 194  
 Walid II ibn Yazid (caliph) 239–40, 242–3, 245–9, 252, 255, 266–7
- Wasit 50, 104, 247–8, 269–70, 275–7, 284
- Yahya ibn Muhammad 290–1  
 Yamanites 268  
 Yarmuk River 90, 100–3  
 Yathrib 63, 87–9, 93, 96, 102, 104, 115–7, 144–8, 175–6, 178, 183–5, 304–5  
 Yazid I ibn Mu'awiya (caliph) 148, 155–6, 158, 161, 171–2, 174–6, 178  
 Yazid II ibn 'Abd al-Malik (caliph) 215, 218–24, 318  
 Yazid III ibn al-Walid (caliph) 245–50, 253  
 Yazid ibn Abi Sakhr, Abu Qarib 178, 184  
 Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan (brother of Mu'awiya) 118  
 Yazid ibn Hisham 260  
 Yazid ibn Hunayn 196  
 Yazid ibn al-Muhallab 218–19  
 Yazid ibn 'Umar ibn Hubayra 261–2, 268–70, 275, 277, 284  
 Yazdgird (Persian emperor) 82–3, 104–6, 136–7  
 Yazdin (treasurer of Khusrau II) 72  
 Yemen 241–3
- Zab River 45–6, 74–7, 275–8  
 Zacharias (patriarch of Jerusalem) 64–5, 78, 84  
 Zayd ibn 'Ali (Shi'ite leader) 235  
 Zenobia 57  
 Ziebel (Khazar chief) 73–4  
 Ziyad ibn 'Abdallah ibn Yazid ibn Mu'awiya 248  
 Zubayr ibn al-'Awamm 145  
 Zufar ibn al-Harith 178  
 Zuhri, Ibn Shihab (historian) 31



# Theophilus of Edessa's Chronicle

## and the Circulation of Historical Knowledge in Late Antiquity and Early Islam

Theophilus of Edessa was an astrologer in the court of the Muslim caliphs from the 750s to the 780s, a time when their capital, Baghdad, was a thriving centre of culture and trade and one of the most populous and prosperous cities of the world. He was fluent in Greek, Syriac and Arabic, and he used this ability to bring together a number of historical sources in each of these languages and blend them into a single chronicle, written in Syriac, that charted events in the Near East from 590 to the 750s. His work is no longer extant, but it was cited extensively by a number of later historians and Robert Hoyland has collected and translated all these citations so as to give an impression of the scope and content of the original text. This is important, because this chronicle underlies much of our historical knowledge about the Near East in the seventh and eighth centuries. This was a crucial period in the region, witnessing as it did the devastating war between Byzantium and Iran, the Arab conquests and the rise to power of the first Muslim Arab dynasty, the Umayyads (660–750), and their subsequent overthrow by the Abbasids, who moved the capital of the Muslim Empire from Damascus to Baghdad. Hoyland also indicates the links between Theophilus' chronicle and other historical works, by Muslims as well as Christians, in order to illustrate the considerable degree of sharing of historical ideas and information among the various communities of the Near East.

The material translated consists of sections of four chronicles that deal with the period 590–750s: one in Greek (Theophanes the Confessor, d. 818), one in Arabic (Agapius of Manbij, fl. 940s) and two in Syriac (Michael the Syrian, d. 1199, and an anonymous author, fl. 1230s, who were both relying on the chronicle of Dionysius of Telmahre, d. 845). The latter three either have not been translated into English before (thus Agapius and Michael the Syrian) or have only been partially translated (the anonymous chronicler of the 1230s). The book also includes a transcription and translation of a section of Agapius' *History* never previously published.

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Cover illustrations: Left: obverse of a gold coin minted at Constantinople in the name of the Byzantine emperor Justinian II, c. 692–3; the image is of a facing bust of Christ (His first appearance ever on a coin), holding a jewelled Gospel and with a cross behind his head; the inscription is *Th(e)st(us) Crist(us) D(ominus) S(alvator) Rex Reginantium*. Right: reverse of a silver coin minted by Bishr ibn Marwan, governor of Iraq, for the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, AH 75/AD 694–5. It is often called the 'orans drachm' and portrays a praying figure, usually assumed to be either 'Abd al-Malik or Bishr himself or a generalised Muslim worshipper/prayer-leader, flanked by two attendants. Drawings by Mark Humphries.

Design by Emily Wilkinson

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